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# Home is Tomorrow

A Play in Two Acts

*by*

J. B. Priestley



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This edition of *Home is Tomorrow* is dedicated to the cast, which, with characters in order of appearance was as follows:

LADY FORTROSE	IRENE WORTH
NILS DAYTON	GORDON TANNER
ANN WESTFIELD	HELEN BACKLIN
SIR GEORGE SURREY	DOUGLAS JEFFERIES
SIR EDWARD FORTROSE	LESLIE BANKS
LOUIS RIBERAC	ALAN WHEATLEY
DR. MELNIK	CECIL TROUNCER
PROFESSOR CHU	JOHN RUDDOCK
KARAM	JOHN NILSSON
ROSA OLACCA	JOY PARKER
FELIPE	EDGAR WHITBURN
LERMA	GEOFFREY DUNN
VEZABAR	BEN ASTAR

Directed by MICHAEL MACOWAN.  
Decor by JANOS HORVATH



## INTRODUCTION

THIS play was written during the winter of 1947-48, although it was partly based on notes I had made before then. It was accepted at once for production by the London Mask Theatre; and casting, which was difficult, went on throughout the early summer. We had some preliminary readings in August and then rehearsals proper began during the first week of September. (I declared then that this was one of the most brilliant and exciting casts I had ever had in a play of mine, and this is still my opinion.) We opened the play at the Princes Theatre, Bradford, on October 11th. In spite of the fact that we were still rehearsing various changes, it was an immediate success. We had a good Press; the theatre was filled to capacity every night; the audiences were deeply attentive and warmly appreciative; there was much excited argument about the play, and some of this argument spilled over into the columns of the local papers: and this is what I mean by "success". The company then moved on to Glasgow, where I did not follow them; but I caught up with them again, during the week afterwards, when they were appearing, again with success, at the formidably large New Theatre at Oxford. Incidentally, what was probably the most intelligent and best-written notice this play received anywhere appeared in *The Oxford Magazine*, whose dramatic critic should be imported to London. On November 4th we opened at the Cambridge Theatre, London; and on December 4th the play had to be withdrawn for lack of adequate support, even in spite of the fact that we had received an advance guarantee from the ticket agencies. Although we all had confidence in the production, the time was fatal to any attempt to save it. We could not transfer it to a smaller theatre, less cavernous in atmosphere and mysterious in its acoustic properties, because no such theatre was available. We could not tour the play again because the larger provincial theatres were now booked for pantomime, whose popularity, by the way, represents a serious handicap to the British dramatist that his American and Continental colleagues have not to face. So we were dished. The hard work of months, together with a substantial capital sum, was tossed into the street.

That, you may say, is the luck of the game. I agree. The rough must be taken with the smooth. But because this seems to me—and



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to many of my friends in the Theatre—the most spectacular and surprising failure I have ever had, I feel some discussion of it here might possibly prove to be of general theatrical interest. First, I will suggest some reasons why perhaps we should not have expected such a play to be popular. It is about a United Nations special agency, and most West End playgoers, especially those who buy the more expensive seats, are not interested in U.N.O. and its special agencies. The setting and atmosphere and personnel of the piece are unusual and odd, far removed from familiar English types in a cosy suburban sitting-room. The story line is complicated: to put it in musical terms—instead of the regular development of a single theme, a melody, there is an elaborate counter-point. Then the personal relationships, which most critics ignored altogether, avoid the familiar pattern and may seem strange, coldish, uncomfortable. And following a number of foreign accents—which in my opinion (and I have a good ear) were extremely well done and not, as some critics suggested, badly done—did not make listening easy, especially in that particular theatre. It is possible too that the whole production was scaled for a more intimate playhouse. All this—and more, if necessary—I will admit. Yet certain facts remain. The play was succeeding in the provinces, as I can testify from my visits to Bradford and Oxford. Furthermore, many people whose opinion I value, as well as many strangers who wrote to me, were enthusiastic about both the play and the production, and some of them told me I had never written anything better. Why then should an important piece of work by an established dramatist, with a distinguished producer, a popular leading man in the chief role, an unusually fine cast, have to be huddled off the stage after a month? Let us admit, for the argument's sake, that the play and the production had plenty of faults. Is the present London standard then so high? Are its theatres filled with faultless masterpieces of dramatic technique, with a queue of equally faultless masterpieces waiting to occupy the stages? The question answers itself.

The truth is, that at the present time the economics of production in the West End do not allow a play to be “nursed”, that is, carried on for some time at a loss while playgoers are discovering for themselves and their friends that a play is worth seeing. (In 1932 *Dangerous Corner* had such poor notices that it was proposed to take it off three days after it opened. I took on the responsibility myself for continuing the run, with the result that *Dangerous Corner* became one of the most widely-played pieces of our time and is still being played all over the world. So much for “nursing”.) Thus, a serious play, as distinct from a musical, a revue, farce or light comedy, all of which appear to operate in a different fashion, is now horribly dependent on the Press. Good notices will immediately keep the Box Office busy:

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bad notices will slow you down just when you need to be speeded up. People who are beginning to feel hard up do not like to risk spending their money on a play that several dramatic critics have condemned. And, I repeat, we can no longer afford, as we could once, to prove that those critics may have been wrong. This particular situation then, composed of mounting running costs and playgoers' caution, places a heavy responsibility upon the critics, who may thus be deciding day by day what kind of Theatre we shall have. And it is my opinion that with *Home Is Tomorrow* the critics did not adequately face this responsibility.

It is quite a mistake to assume, as many people appear to do, that I have long had a standing feud with the critics. It is true that, like the naughty animal of the French naturalist's observation, I am a creature that when attacked has the temerity to defend itself. But I have in my time, notably in the years immediately before the War, received much kindness and many handsome compliments from the critics. (One of them, using a queer technique, while always denouncing any new play I have to offer as so much dreary rubbish, still refers to me flatteringly as a very distinguished figure indeed in contemporary drama. What a pity I write plays!) But unfortunately they have shown themselves to be increasingly suspicious of and hostile to any change and experiment in either the form or content of the drama. Time after time, when attempting something new, I have found that the opposition came not from managers, producers, actors or audiences but from the critics, the very persons who ought to be delighted to welcome a little originality and experiment in a Theatre cluttered up with clichés. *Johnson Over Jordan*, *Music at Night*, *Ever Since Paradise*, were enjoyed by audiences of varying types; but not by the critics. *An Inspector Calls* has been produced successfully in many different countries, and the only really stupid hostile notices it received, so far as I can remember, appeared in the city it was written in, London. And now—*Home Is Tomorrow*, which, whatever its faults, undoubtedly suffered most from the attitude of the Press towards it.

A few examples will do. Here is a play about a U.N.O. special agency on a crowded tropical island, on which deposits of beryl or beryllium silicate have been found. One notice in a popular London daily was headed "Discussion on a Desert Island"; another notice, in a similar paper, said the play was all about a discovery of radium; and a third said that it dealt with a U.N.O. Conference. One important critic announced that this was not really a play at all but a bunch of essays; to which I can only retort that any time this critic attempts to keep audiences in large crowded theatres entertained by a bunch of essays, I hope he will ask me to be present. Another well-known critic, who has done much good work for the Theatre and ought to

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know better by this time, complained that he did not know what my "message" was. Yet another, who also ought to know better, grumbled because he could not find "any Yorkshire humour" in this play. The representative of the most intelligent weekly we have, who might have been expected to bring a little understanding to the theatre with him, announced that I was really trying to write "a political thriller", a kind of dramatised John Buchan story; and I leave readers to judge the value of this statement for themselves. And the production and acting fared little better. To take one example: the scenes between Miss Joy Parker, as "Rosa", and Mr. Alan Wheatley, as "Riberac", completely held and fascinated every audience I saw both in the provinces and at the Cambridge; and no scenes in any play of mine have ever been performed with more sincerity, sensitiveness of tone, and exquisite timing; and yet the beautiful work of these two players, which every audience appreciated, received no recognition in most of the notices. And I find this alarming, for it looks as if the curious blight is now spreading from me to my unfortunate actors.

Even if this play were only half as good as some of us think it is, even if its faults are gigantic and it is really an experiment that was bound to fail, I maintain that it deserved much better treatment than it received. It is not a question of being given praise but of being given, after months of hard work on this particular job and after years of playwriting, some serious intelligent consideration. Now and again these same critics complain, as well they might, that they see too much of the same old stuff; and yet it seems to me that they themselves are chiefly to blame, if only because anything that breaks away from the all-too-familiar dramatic form or content appears to arouse their hostility or, failing that, to leave them blank and yawning. And unfortunately what they say is more and more important, because they can keep the Box Office busy or idle during the first decisive weeks; and with running costs so disproportionately high and with the limited audiences for serious plays beginning to feel cautious about spending their money (though why playgoers never trust an author as readers of his books do, has always been a mystery to me), we must depend now on those first weeks, and thus must depend on what the critics say about us. Many of them—and their editors—do not realise yet how great a responsibility they bear now. If they did, I believe there would soon be less trivial and flippant comment. It does not matter about this particular play, which has now come and gone. But it does matter what kind of Theatre we create in this country, at a time when we need all the best things that the Theatre can give us. Its economics are crazy—I have said all I want to say about them elsewhere—but it has its share of people

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who are ready to work hard and as truthfully and sensitively as they know how; and I hold that such people are entitled to more serious and intelligent consideration than they are now receiving.

And at least I can produce my own thanks, which go out most warmly to Michael Macowan, to the cast and stage staff of the *Home Is Tomorrow* company, who all rehearsed so many long hours without murmur, were unfailingly loyal and cheerful, and deserved so much better fortune than I could contrive for them.

J. B. PRIESTLEY.

## **ACT I**

**SCENE I**

**Early evening.**

**SCENE II**

**Morning, two days later.**

## **ACT II**

**SCENE I**

**Late afternoon, a fortnight later.**

**SCENE II**

**Night, same day.**

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Action throughout takes place in Sir Edward Fortrose's room, just outside Port San Pedro, on the island of Corabana in the South Caribbean.

At the present time.

## **CHARACTERS**

(in order of appearance)

**LADY (JILL) FORTROSE**

**NILS DAYTON**

**ANN WESTFIELD**

**SIR GEORGE SURREY**

**SIR EDWARD FORTROSE**

**LOUIS RIBERAC**

**DR. MELNIK**

**PROFESSOR CHU**

**KARAM**

**ROSA OLACCA**

**FELIPE**

**LERMA**

**VEZABAR**

## ACT I

### SCENE I

*(A wide rectangular room, part of a large house in a tropical island.*

*Down stage left (actors') is an ordinary door leading to the administration offices. On the back wall are three double doors with louvres leading to a balcony, and behind this balcony can be seen some tropical foliage, and in the distance sharp mountain peaks and the sky. On the right wall, about centre, is a double door with louvres leading to the living quarters of the house.*

*This room, which is plainly furnished and decorated, preferably having very light walls, is something between an office and a sitting-room, and is in fact the room where SIR EDWARD FORTROSE does most of his work and sees people. The office part of the room is on the left. There is a large modern desk there, and behind it a bookcase and filing cabinet, and on the left wall is a large map of U.N.O., and at the left end of the back wall is a fairly large map of Corabana itself with the four different sections of the island differently coloured. There is a lamp on the desk and also a large standard lamp in the right upstage corner, and another smaller lamp preferably on a very narrow table down stage of the right wall. There are various chairs scattered about the room, and if possible these should be very light cane armchairs that can be easily moved. All fittings and furnishings should be modern; there should be no carpet but a painted stage cloth to suggest either fine matting or tiles; and the general effect, though not bleak, should be rather impersonal.*

*When the scene opens it is early evening. The open doors at the back show a pale murky green sky, which soon fades with the dark peaks silouetted against it. Light is coming from the louvres on the right, behind which a party is taking place. We can hear the chatter of the guests, the clatter of glasses and plates, and some distant music. There is enough light coming through to show that the stage is empty. After a few moments of party noises we hear the following dialogue off stage.)*

GIRL (*just off*): But—UNUTO! It sounds like a fountain pen or something. . . .

DR. MELNIK (*off, boisterously*): But he's not UNUTO—he's UNESCO—

OLDER WOMAN (*off*): Oh—dear! All these new words. It's like another language, isn't it?

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PROF. CHU (*soft but very clear, off*): Yes. But only a little new language. And I think it would be better to learn it—very quick.

(*He laughs in his own fashion. The women join in doubtfully.*)

JILL FORTROSE and NILS DAYTON now slip into the room quietly from R. and NILS as he comes in pushes back—or alternatively swings to behind him—one of the two doors, the lower one, thereby darkening a little the downstage R. corner where they are. Each still has a glass. These prevent their embracing with any passion but they do embrace, and then whisper)

DAYTON (*with fervour*): Darling!

JILL (*with not quite so much fervour*): Darling!

DAYTON: Gosh—this is wonderful.

JILL: We can't stay, though. Much too risky.

DAYTON: I know. But just for a minute. It's been five whole days.

JILL: Your fault, not mine.

DAYTON: I had to be up there. Came back the minute the job was done.

JILL: What job? What's it all about?

DAYTON: Can't tell you yet.

JILL: When can you?

DAYTON: Soon. Depends on you, though. When you come through, then I'll come through.

JILL: Then we'll both have to wait a little longer.

DAYTON: Don't make it too tough for me. I'm crazy about you.

JILL (*with more fervour now*): Darling!

(*As they embrace—or she puts a hand to his cheek and he puts his hand over hers—ANN WESTFIELD enters R. and quickly switches on light near door, lighting up all that end of room. JILL and DAYTON spring apart, turn and stare at ANN. All three are now clearly seen: JILL is about thirty-five, intensely feminine, beautiful and dressed with great style. She has a clear-cut upper-class English accent. ANN is a New Englander, about thirty, rather severe in appearance and style but by no means unattractive. NILS DAYTON is about thirty-five, tall, fair, good-looking, a Californian with a Swedish mother. He is extremely well-dressed in the Californian-tropical style. He affects an easy boyish manner but it is not quite convincing—and there is something wrong. It is quite clear that the two women thoroughly dislike each other, and have stopped even pretending that they don't.*)

ANN (*rather pointedly*): Oh! Sorry!

DAYTON (*not carrying it off too well*): Couldn't find that darned switch.

JILL (*calmly*): I wouldn't bother, Nils. Even if it were true she wouldn't believe you.

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ANN (*ignoring this*): I was told to come in here and turn on some lights. Edward—Sir Edward——

(*She is now moving across the room.*)

JILL (*cutting in*): No, no—just Edward. Don't let's pretend about that either. Is he going to use this room?

ANN (*now over on L.*): He said he wanted some of us to meet Sir George Surrey in here—out of the rumpus.

(*She has now switched on the other lights and the room is completely illuminated. If back doors are used, here she would close them.*)

DAYTON: I'd better beat it.

JILL: There's no hurry—and you certainly mustn't leave the party. Help me to entertain the rest of the mob. They won't be staying long.

(*As she begins to move, slowly, up towards R., SIR ROBERT SURREY enters, rather uncertainly, like a man in unfamiliar surroundings. He is a solid, very English type, in his late fifties, and not so stupid as he seems. Unlike the others he is not dressed for this climate, and so he is uncomfortably warm and keeps mopping his face. He is tired and rather dazed, but does his best.*)

SURREY: Ah—Lady Fortrose—your husband asked me to come in here—to meet some of his staff. Warm, isn't it? (*Mops his face.*)

JILL (*with much charm*): Poor man, you're having a miserable time, aren't you? It's all Edward's fault——

SURREY: No—no—that's all right. Rather fagged, though.

JILL: I warned him that the very most you'd want to cope with would be a tiny dinner party—after all this air travel and being shot about like a mad parcel.

SURREY: Quite. Trouble is, you hardly know where you are. Four days ago I was planting out my rose trees in Bagshot. Then—Rio. Now—here. Tomorrow possibly—with luck—Mexico City. Then Washington—and Lake Success.

JILL (*smiling*): And really—you'd much rather be in Bagshot.

SURREY: Certainly. Wouldn't you?

JILL (*with deliberate hesitation*): I'm not—sure.

(*DAYTON looks at her quickly.*)

ANN (*who has now come nearer*): Sir George—have you met Mr. Dayton?

SURREY: Yes—rather. Met in the other room, didn't we?

DAYTON: We did. And I found you a Scotch highball. What about another?

SURREY: Well——

JILL: Yes, of course. Hurry, Nils, and bring a nice cold one—mix it yourself.

DAYTON (*as he goes*): You bet! (*Goes out R.*)



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SURREY: Very good of you. Only thing I can take at these affairs—whisky and soda. Good clean drink.

JILL (*smilingly*): I never know what that means—but it's heavenly hearing somebody say it again. My father always used to say it—Good Clean Drink. But what on earth is happening to Edward?

ANN (*making a move up R.*): I'd better go and see.

JILL (*sweetly*): If you don't mind.

ANN (*who is now near the door R.*): Oh—he's here.

(*She draws back from door. SIR EDWARD FORTROSE enters, almost with a rush. He is about forty-seven, a personality but with nothing particularly handsome or distinguished about his appearance. He is rather grey, not so tanned as most of the other men and, while trying to hide it, gives the impression of being tired from overwork. He is carelessly dressed. His superficial manner is quick, light, easy, suggesting a certain type of un-donnish Oxford don, but behind this manner there are signs of a grave steadiness of purpose. At the moment he is more the host of a party than the administrator.*)

FORTROSE (*seeing SURREY first*): My dear chap, I'm so sorry. A Madwoman got hold of me—we have two or three here. Oh—Jill—I wondered where you were.

JILL: Do you want me to cope?

FORTROSE: Yes, my dear—but don't do it long—just get rid of 'em somehow. Oh—and tell old Karam to let us have a few drinks and bit to eat in here, will you? And whisky for Sir George, please.

JILL (*moving up R.*): I've sent Nils Dayton for a specially big cold one.

FORTROSE: *Wonderful!* Let's hope that Austrian woman with the orange hair hasn't taken him prisoner. (*To SURREY as JILL goes.*) You'd imagine there wouldn't be any European freaks on this small remote island. But we have our quota—in fact, rather more than our share. And it's all the same whether you invite them or not, they come to all parties.

ANN: Shall I tell the others to come along?

FORTROSE: No, they're coming. (*To SURREY.*) I think you've already met Miss Westfield, haven't you? But not officially—as a member of my staff.

SURREY: Oh—one of your UNUTO people, is she?

ANN (*smiling*): It sounds terrible, the way you say it. But that's just what I am.

FORTROSE (*brightly but not insincerely*): Ann's really my chief assistant, now that van Dahlen's left us. She's a New Englander and a sociologist, and she brings the New England conscience into our

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sessions and labours here. And the New England conscience is very fierce, let me tell you.

SURREY (*glancing at ANN*): Ah! Boston?

ANN: Near enough.

SURREY: Good! Prefer Boston to most American places.

(*As he says this, NILS DAYTON arrives hastily triumphantly holding out large whisky and soda.*)

DAYTON (*boisterously*): What about California, Sir George?

SURREY (*taking drink*): Don't care for it much. Grateful for this, though. Thanks.

FORTROSE: Dayton, would you mind giving Jill a hand in getting rid of the crowd—or keeping 'em amused?

DAYTON (*moving*): Be glad to.

ANN (*as he passed, with marked irony*): Nice of you.

DAYTON (*stopping to give her a stare*): Might be—at that.

(*He goes out R.*)

SURREY: Not one of your staff, eh?

FORTROSE: No. Tourist. One of the playboys of the Western world.

ANN: I've just discovered he's a playboy who took a darned long hard course at Pasadena.

FORTROSE: Oh—that's where it was, eh? (*To SURREY.*) Miss Westfield doesn't like him, though he's a fellow-countryman of hers.

ANN: A Californian—with a Swedish mother. That puts him a long way from New England.

SURREY: Seems a pleasant fellow. What's wrong with him?

ANN: I don't like the shape of his head—or the look in his eyes. Something both hard and empty about him. And I don't trust him.

FORTROSE (*smiling*): Feminine intuition, of course, not sociology. (*To SURREY.*) Our staff here is international, from all over the place—naturally——

SURREY: Yes—it's the curse of these United Nations agencies—have to put in so many foreigners. Well—cheers! (*drinks*).

FORTROSE: Cheers, my dear chap. Sure you need it.

ANN (*smiling*): Good clean drink?

SURREY (*smiling*): Exactly. And I *did* need that. Damned hot, isn't it? Though this is better than the other room. (*Mops himself a little.*)

FORTROSE: Not so many people. It's the people, not the climate that sends the temperature up.

(*LOUIS RIBERAC arrives in doorway.*)

Come in, Louis.

(*RIBERAC comes in. He is French, in his early thirties, neat,*

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*graceful, with considerable charm. He is not masculine nor yet effeminate but has a curious sexless quality. His English is excellent but he has a not unpleasant French accent.)*

This is Louis Riberac, who is our economic and financial adviser. Louis—this is Sir George Surrey, one of those deceptive and dangerous characters from His Majesty's Foreign Office.

SURREY: How do you do?

RIBERAC: Pleasure, Sir George. I have heard of you, of course.

SURREY: Have you? I'm rather surprised.

FORTROSE: Don't be. Louis knows everything—

ANN (*lightly but with a touch of sharpness*): And believes in nothing.

RIBERAC: No, at this hour I believe in Dry Martini or gin and Dubonnet. Can we not have a drink in here?

FORTROSE: I've asked for some to be sent in.

RIBERAC: I'm sorry if I sound greedy but as a matter of fact I have not yet had a drink. That terrible old Dutchman from Curacao took me at once into a corner and would not let me go.

FORTROSE: What's the old monster grumbling about now?

RIBERAC: The sexual morals of this island. Being a Frenchman it is probably all my fault. So first I apologised, and then when he would not stop and was more and more furious about it, I told him he is jealous of these boys and girls when he sees them hurrying into the bushes—just jealous. "Calm yourself, my friend," I said to him. "You are over-rating these pleasures. My own experience, which is far more recent—

ANN (*half joking, half serious*): Louis!

RIBERAC (*mockingly*): Ann! My dear Ann!

FORTROSE (*cheerfully*): Shut up, both of you.

SURREY (*staring at RIBERAC*): So you're the economic expert here, eh?

RIBERAC (*with touch of mockery*): Yes—and I am really not too bad—

FORTROSE: He's very good indeed.

RIBERAC (*to SURREY*): Would you like some statistics—coffee, bananas—?

SURREY (*hurriedly*): No thanks. Not my kind of thing. But the island's pretty prosperous, is it?

RIBERAC: Not yet. But of course it's not been properly developed. After all, aren't we the United Nations Undeveloped Territories Organisation? But sometimes we have an idea there may be some valuable minerals up in the hills to the north.

SURREY: Indeed?

ANN: I think Nils Dayton may have that idea too.

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RIBERAC: Ah! That interests me very much, my dear Ann. You remember——

FORTROSE (*cutting in lightly but firmly*): Some other time, I think, Louis. And if it's really important, raise it at our next meeting here.

ANN: Not tomorrow, by the way, Louis. Day after tomorrow—in the morning.

SURREY (*to FORTROSE*): Don't stop them for me, y'know. I was quite interested.

FORTROSE (*smiling*): No, my dear chap, we wouldn't dream of boring you with our little island affairs.

*(There is a moment's pause, in which FORTROSE smiles at SURREY, who stares at him unsmilingly with slightly raised eyebrows; and ANN and RIBERAC exchange glances. This awkward silence is broken by the rather noisy entrance of DR. MELNIK and PROFESSOR CHU. MELNIK, a Czech, is a burly man in his fifties, with a forceful dramatic manner. His English is fluent but has a marked Czech accent, and if necessary his dialogue can be modified slightly to suit this accent, which should be authentic. He is very carelessly, almost slovenly, dressed, yet quite clean in his person, like a good doctor.)*

PROFESSOR CHU is a small round Chinese, of indeterminate middle-age. He wears large tortoiseshell spectacles. He is very trim. His English is precise, scholarly, but has the softened Chinese accent, which must be as authentic as possible. He is always smiling, showing excellent teeth, and laughs a great deal in the pleasant but rather meaningless Chinese fashion. He is a shrewd, much-travelled and learned Oriental, and must not be presented as a comic character. He is quite sober. But MELNIK, though not drunk, is feeling the effects of many drinks, and is sweating, loud, dramatic. They are followed in by KARAM, an oldish native servant, who is carrying a tray on which are various cocktails and some long drinks of the Planter's Punch type and some sandwiches and canapes.

Ah!—here you are. Dr. Melnik. Professor Chu. Sir George Surrey.

*(They shake hands and murmur greetings, while FORTROSE, noting KARAM, who is hesitating with his tray, continues briskly.)*

Oh—Karam, put the things down there, will you, and then you can go and look after the rest of the party. Please take what you want, everybody.

*(KARAM nods and smiles and puts down tray on a small table near the group. Then he goes, closing door R.)*

Ann—do have something—an orange drink—a sandwich? Louis, now's your chance. Chu. Melnik?

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MELNIK: I have had many drinks already.

FORTROSE: I'm sure you have, but have some more. Chu look after Sir George.

(FORTROSE picks up a plate, to offer it round, and takes a drink for himself. Throughout following dialogue there is some eating and drinking, all in character. MELNIK both eats and drinks greedily, CHU and ANN sparingly. RIBERAC drinks but does not eat. FORTROSE, while giving as host a brisk festive air to occasion, takes little himself. He can offer things or point, without interrupting dialogue; and ANN helps him as hostess.)

CHU (to SURREY): You do not make a long stay here?

SURREY: No, just passing through. On my way from South America to Washington and Lake Success. May be off again in the morning.

CHU (smilingly): That will be very nice.

MELNIK: Why will it be very nice?

FORTROSE (smiling): That's just politeness—a present from an old civilisation.

CHU (to SURREY, smilingly): But it is very beautiful here. In the garden of my little bungalow I smell the orange groves on the hills, and the almond trees and the frangipani snow down their scented blossoms, and in the evening, when all is dark purple, I see the fire-flies dancing below on the sand. It is very beautiful.

SURREY: Yes—it must be.

CHU: To write little Chinese poems about it is easy. But to paint it in the Chinese way is difficult.

FORTROSE: Professor Chu was lent to us by UNESCO to look after our Fundamental Education here.

SURREY (startled): God God! (recovers himself hastily, turning to CHU) I mean—what is this Fundamental Education?

CHU (smiling): Education from beginning—for undeveloped peoples. We teach them to write—so that they can make many complaints about faulty officials, especially Chinese officials. We teach them to read—so that they can take up newspapers and learn about all quarrels in the world and atom bomb and perhaps biological warfare. Then they are no longer ignorant peasants all quite happy.

(He smile at SURREY, who regards him with bewilderment. After a pause—)

ANN (indignantly): You really shouldn't talk like that. It's bad enough when Louis does it—but there's no excuse for you. And Sir George will go away thinking we don't believe in the work we're doing here.

FORTROSE (lightly but firmly): Well he'd be wrong. We do.

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CHU (*to both ANN and SURREY*): So sorry. Little joke.

RIBERAC: It did not sound like a joke to me.

ANN: Stop it, Louis! (*to SURREY, eagerly*) Professor Chu and his whole education group have worked desperately hard and already they're producing wonderful results. If only——.

FORTROSE (*cutting in*): No, not *if only*. They are producing wonderful results.

MELNIK (*boisterously*): And what about me? Am I not producing wonderful results too?

FORTROSE: Yes, of course you are.

MELNIK (*gloomily*): No, you are wrong. I am not. But we have more superstitious and reactionary practices to fight than they have even in Education.

FORTROSE (*to SURREY*): Dr. Melnik, who comes from Czechoslovakia, is head of our medical staff.

SURREY: Ah—yes. People fairly healthy here?

MELNIK (*dramatically*): Healthy? They look nice sometimes, eh? Pretty little girls—nice armfuls, eh? Brown men—black men—muscles shining in the sun—very fine—very æsthetic, eh? (*He makes startling derisive noise, right at the startled Sir George*) I tell you, my friend, they crawl—they *stink*—with disease. Listen to me. You are in a medical museum—and all round you are glass jars where diseased or freak organs are nicely preserved in alcohol. Well then, you are drunk—or you are mad—then you see all these things come out of their jars to turn into people—and then you are here in Corabana, working for UNUTO.

SURREY (*embarrassed*): Humph! Bad as that, is it?

ANN: No, it isn't.

MELNIK (*who has had a drink and ignored all this*): How do I spend my time late at night, when the work for the day is at last finished?

FORTROSE (*lightly*): Drinking rum and playing your little brute of a gramophone.

MELNIK: Very well, I am drinking rum and listening to my poor little gramophone—(*he sketches himself huddled over a tiny machine*)—the string quartets of Beethoven, the clarinet quintet of Brahms, the music of Dvorak and Smetana—and what am I thinking? Am I dreaming of love and friendship in the Spring forests and lakes in the moonlight? Never, never! I am thinking how it would be possible to make the mass production of the Wassermann Test—fifty people at a time for Wassermann Test.

SURREY (*a little dazed by all this*): Got your work cut out here, eh?

MELNIK (*puzzled and indignant*): Cut out? No, it is not cut out. Who can cut it out?

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CHU (*laughing*): No, no. English idiom—meaning all very difficult.

MELNIK: So—yes—it is very difficult. But why not? What kind of world is this we are living in? I will tell you, my friend. (*Here he stares fiercely at SURREY, who almost recoils.*) Not like British Foreign Office—oh, no, no, no! No nice office—little villa with garden—Oxford-Cambridge club—Dukes' cricket place—all very fine with wealth of old Empire. No, no, no! Most of this world is full of people who are hungry, who have disease and see children with disease, who are full of fear—what is to happen tomorrow—miserable, miserable people. Yet men, real men, like—like Beethoven, Smetana—women like—like Greta Garbo—or nice Miss Ann Westfield—.

ANN (*laughing*): Who's just like Greta Garbo.

MELNIK (*ignoring this*): When British Foreign Office does something for all such people, I will like British Foreign Office very much. Until then—no, never!

SURREY: Oh!—I'm sorry you don't approve of us.

MELNIK: I am glad. I am also, I think, a little drunk. But—we work hard here. We begin to do something for such people—not much, but we make a beginning. Take that message, please, back to British Foreign Office. (*Suddenly shakes the astonished SURREY, warmly by the hand.*) I am damned glad to meet you, Sir Surrey. Goodbye.

(*He turns and begins to march out R.*)

RIBERAC (*moving*): I will see him through the party out there.

FORTROSE: He's all right really—but one of you might keep an eye on him.

CHU (*also moving*): Allow me, please. (*To SURREY and FORTROSE.*) Excuse me.

(*RIBERAC and CHU hurry out R. after MELNIK.*)

SURREY: He's had a few drinks of course, but over and above that I'd say he was an unbalanced sort of chap, Fortrose.

FORTROSE (*dryly*): He worked three years in a concentration camp, which isn't quite the best training for what is called a balanced outlook. But he's a dam' good chap at his job.

SURREY: Communist?

FORTROSE (*lightly*): Might be.

ANN: Of course he is.

FORTROSE: Have another drink, Ann. (*As she shakes her head.*) Somebody must have something. What about another whisky and soda?

SURREY: No thanks. Had my allowance.

(*Enter from L.—ROSA OLACCA, a young half-caste Corabian girl, pretty, neatly dressed. She is carrying a typed message.*)

FORTROSE *sees her as she comes in.*)

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FORTROSE (*gaily*): Ah—Rosa. Now here's another member of our staff—Miss Rosa Olacca.

SURREY (*without shaking hands as she is too far away*): How d'you do?

(ROSA, *embarrassed, smiles and nods*.)

FORTROSE: My own secretary—Miss Dodds—is on leave. You must know Miss Dodds—she came to us from the Foreign office—.

SURREY: Yes, I remember Miss Dodds. Tall thin girl—very superior—.

FORTROSE: She's still tall and thin but probably less superior. But the point is—while Miss Dodds is on leave, Rosa here is acting as my secretary—and doing it very well, aren't you, Rosa?

ROSA (*confused*): I'm doing my best—sir. (*She speaks good English with just a trace of some exotic accent*.)

FORTROSE: Rosa's a Corabana girl, and we managed to get her a British Council scholarship, so she went to England and learned her shorthand and typing there. Now she's one of us—a good Unutonian—

SURREY: A *what*? Oh—I see—Unuto—Unutonian. What terrible jargon you fellows have to use!

(ROSA has now handed the typed message to FORTROSE, who reads it. SURREY speaks to her as she waits.)

Did you like England?

ROSA (*shyly*): Yes, sir, very much, thank you.

SURREY: Where did they send you?

ROSA: Birmingham.

SURREY: Good Lord! And you liked Birmingham?

ROSA: Yes sir, though at first it seemed rather cold and dark. But it was exciting to see all the people and the big buildings—and the trams.

FORTROSE (*looking up*): Rosa loved the Birmingham trams. She's made me feel I ought to go and have another look at them. This is really your message—to say that your plane will take off as soon as it's light—say, about six. All right?

SURREY: Excellent. I suppose I can get some transport to the airfield?

FORTROSE: Yes, I'll fix that. In fact, I'll do it now.

(*He goes behind desk to telephone, and stands where the red flowers show vividly against his light coat. As he telephones, SURREY talks to ROSA.*)

SURREY: But you don't want to go back to Birmingham, eh?

ROSA (*shyly, carefully*): Only for a visit sometimes, sir, to see my friends. This is my home—and I think—(*she hesitates*).

ANN (*encouragingly*): Go on, Rosa. Tell us.



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ROSA: Well, I think UNUTO is trying to help our people—and it's much better here now than it was before UNUTO came.

SURREY (*more to ANN than to ROSA*): Let's see—this island originally belonged to Spain, didn't it?

ANN: Yes, then it revolted in Thirty-Nine and became a messy kind of independent republic, run by a bunch of racketeers. And then in Forty-One, for security reasons, our American Forces occupied it—

SURREY: Until the Undeveloped Territories Organisation took over. (*To ROSA.*) But don't tell me, young woman, that all your people here agree with you—I mean, about UNUTO.

ROSA: No, sir, a lot of them don't. Especially the older ones. My grandmother is always trying to stop me coming to work here. She wants me to marry an island boy, who won't let me alone—(*she breaks off, looking troubled.*)

ANN (*heartily*): I'll say he won't. And I'm sick and tired seeing him hanging about.

ROSA (*troubled*): It's not my fault.

ANN (*kindly*): I know it isn't. Don't worry. (*Sees that FORTROSE has now finished telephoning.*) Come along, Rosa. I've a job for you. Excuse me, Sir George.

(*ANN and ROSA go out L. SURREY looks at FORTROSE.*)

SURREY: All right?

FORTROSE (*coming down*): Yes, I've arranged for your transport. Everything's all set for the morning. (*He can here light a pipe or cigarette.*)

SURREY (*already sitting down*): Thanks. I'll leave you soon—turn in early. But I'd like a chat with you first.

FORTROSE (*sitting*): Good!

SURREY (*after pause, easily*): Very different here from the old Colonial Office—eh?

FORTROSE (*dryly at first, then expanding*): Very. We're quite a long way from Whitehall. And you have to live here to know how far. (*Pauses a moment.*) Out there—only a few hundred yards away—is darkness—primeval darkness—like the old Unconscious, full of vengeful gods, vampire goddesses, demons, ghosts. Here is a little lighted place, where consciousness exists, where—God help us—we try to see things clearly and for what they are. We have other little places—I could show you on the map there—just tiny outposts, with the huge ancient darkness all round them, threatening them all the time. I can only keep the steadiest fellows out there very long. The rest soon go queer if they're not relieved. The dark begins to seep through. They see and hear things they shouldn't see and hear. Even I sometimes—(*breaks off, shrugs his shoulders.*) No, we'll not bother about that.

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SURREY (*looking hard at him*): You need some leave, don't you?

FORTROSE: Yes. It's overdue. But I hope to get away in two or three weeks. (*Changes tone.*) Now—that little typist girl—Rosa. She's a half-caste. Her family want her back in the hut, squatting over the stewpot. And they may get her yet, especially if some native lad can persuade her to go with him one night behind the oleanders. We fight here for Rosa and her kind, and she's helping us to do it.

(*He is interrupted by the entrance R. of JILL. Both men stand.*)

JILL: Sorry to interrupt, darling. But two things. First, you did say you'd be working tonight, didn't you?

FORTROSE: Yes. I must. Why?

JILL: Well, Nils Dayton has just had a message that a yacht belonging to a friend of his has at last arrived, after being due in for days. And he's been asked to go out and dine on this yacht and wants me to go with him. That's all right, isn't it? It'll be heaven to be on the water after this sticky party.

FORTROSE: Of course it will. By the way, who owns the yacht?

JILL: Do sit down, Sir George. Oh—a very rich old gent called Lerma. I've never heard of him but Nils seems to know him quite well.

FORTROSE: I've heard of him. What's the other thing?

JILL: Everybody's gone now—except the wretched Merzheims, who insist upon having a word with you about some idiotic grievance they've cooked up. Could you go and see what it's all about, darling, and then tell them firmly to go? It won't take five minutes, and I can entertain Sir George.

FORTROSE: Certainly you can, but can I entertain the Merzheims? Or do I just push them out?

(*He goes out R. JILL sits down and smiles at SURREY.*)

JILL: I hope I didn't crash in on anything official?

SURREY: No, we hadn't quite come to that. Your husband was telling me about this little half-caste typist girl—Rosa Somebody. He was saying it's touch-and-go whether she turns native or clings to the twin ideals of Birmingham and UNUTO. He seems to think it important—but I don't quite see why,

JILL: Neither do I. Actually I prefer Corabana as it is—or as it would be if Edward and his gang of international busybodies would leave it alone.

SURREY (*obviously interested*): Ah—you do—do you?

JILL: I do, but I suppose I oughtn't to be telling you so.

SURREY: Why not?

JILL: Because Edward would hate it. He's very serious about his UNUTO.

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SURREY: So I gather. And you—are not impressed, eh?

JILL: No. And I'd better leave it at that.

SURREY: Come on now. It won't go any further. Just between ourselves.

JILL (*after a pause, explosively*): I hate the whole thing. It's pretentious and damned silly. All this stuff about internationalism and a world society—it's nothing but empty talk—busybody nonsense.

SURREY: So you don't think much of this little lighted bit of civilisation against the primitive darkness outside—eh?

JILL: Edward's been giving you that, has he? Well, the answer is—no I don't. I'd rather have the darkness outside. At least it's real—it's life—full of scents and sounds—with wind and rain and starlight. It responds to something in our heart and blood.

SURREY (*with a wave*): And this doesn't—um?

JILL (*with sharp contempt*): No. It's sterile, arid, lifeless. Sometimes I feel there's a kind of grey dustiness taking possession of Edward (*she breaks off as if she felt she had said too much. Then, with more vehemence*) What they're trying to make here will never be really alive. Only an imitation of something half-dead somewhere else. Surbiton in the tropics. No more dignified Indians and jolly lazy blacks and picturesque riffraff, enjoying their life in their own way. Instead—committees of pimply clerks and anæmic school-teachers droning on about Education and Culture and the United Nations and Internationalism and Peace. If I knew you better I'd tell you what I thought about it all in one short word.

SURREY: Then I wish you did know me better. And I couldn't agree with you more. Nor be so eloquent.

JILL (*lighting a cigarette*): Sorry if I'm talking too much. It's that damned party—having to pretend and then taking one or two cocktails too many to keep myself going. It's such a relief to say what I think.

SURREY: Go on, go on. Don't stop.

JILL (*rising, moving restlessly*): No, I'm talking too much. But I'll say this. I was brought up in a good old English country house, before taxation became downright robbery. That was a good life—perhaps the best there is. Done for now, I suppose.

SURREY: Just about—worse luck!

JILL: For all that—with the right sort of person I could exist quite cheerfully in one of these Port San Pedro waterfront slums or in a hut on the hills—just a good-tempered slut who didn't give a damn. Yes, I mean it, and I know what I'm talking about. But what I couldn't possibly do is to live a namby-pamby lower-middle-class suburban existence, stiff with third-hand culture and earnest idiotic committees and bloody-minded busybodying. And I just don't want Funda-

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mental Education for natives and hygiene for everybody and a world society and UNO and UNESCO and UNUTO. I despise three-quarters of it and absolutely loathe the rest. There—I've finished.

*(She looks at him almost angrily for a moment, then as their eyes meet they both suddenly laugh. She now sits down again, and he now looks serious.)*

SURREY (*quietly*): I'll be equally frank with you, Lady Fortrose. I think your husband is wasting his time here—and missing some valuable opportunities. We all know he's a very able administrator—with an easy but firm touch of his own—the kind of camouflaged leadership we badly need at home now—and if he's not careful, he'll find this UNUTO thing has collapsed under him and he has a bad failure on his hands.

JILL (*staring at him appraisingly*): You're cleverer than I thought.

SURREY: I have to be cleverer than people think.

JILL: Then you've probably guessed that behind this bogus-hearted Oxford tutor manner of his, Edward is horribly serious about his United Nations Undeveloped Territories Organisation—I just won't say that foul word UNUTO again tonight.

SURREY (*very quietly*): How much influence have you with him?

JILL (*also quietly*): I've been waiting for that question. And now if I'm going to answer it—and it's damned cheek of you to ask me—I really have to be frank with you. Can I trust you?

SURREY: No.

JILL: Then I will.

SURREY: It isn't personal curiosity, you know.

JILL: I didn't think it was. Well, Edward's still devoted to me in his own curious kind of way. If I was equally devoted to him, then I might be able to answer your question as you'd like it answered. But I'm not. You're too late. It's possible that soon—quite soon—(*she breaks off, with a glance towards door L.*).

SURREY: Yes?

*(But she shakes her head, and understanding now, he continues in rather louder, more social tone.)*

If I hadn't felt so tired, I'd have liked to have joined you on that yacht. But I shall turn in.

JILL (*same tone as his*): No dinner?

*(As FORTROSE now enters L.)*

SURREY: Not even any dinner. Don't feel like it.

*(JILL rises, clearly in a hurry to go now. SURREY gets up too.)*

FORTROSE: I'd practically to carry the Merzheims to the door. Thank God they're leaving the island next week. Going, Jill?

JILL: Yes, I must fly. *(To SURREY, holding out her hand.)* Goodbye, Sir George—I'm sorry you have to leave us so soon.

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SURREY: I know—nuisance, isn't it? Still—we had some talk. Goodbye then——

*(They shake hands and JILL then hurries straight out L.)*

FORTROSE *(looking after her)*: Strange how most women really hate the sea and yet have a passion for yachts. I suppose that explains why all these rich old lechers go in for yachts. Have a drink?

SURREY: No thanks. Just want a quiet word or two with you, then I'll be off. Dog tired. Can't rest properly on these long plane journeys. *(Sits.)*

FORTROSE: Neither can I. Secretly, I suppose, I'm just terrified. *(Pokes about on tray for a sandwich.)*

SURREY *(obviously opening his talk)*: How are things going here?

FORTROSE: Rather well really. We've two groups dead against us. One's educational and cultural, so to speak—Rosa's grandmother and her witch doctor pals against Melnik and the Wassermann Test. The other's economic and political—the gang of toughs who were running the island and have had their racket ruined. Luckily for us, the toughest of the toughs, a kind of quadroon Hitler, had to leave the island and——

SURREY: Who's that?

FORTROSE: Vezabar. One of the leaders in their revolt against the Spanish. I've never met him, but I gather he's able in his own way and a very unpleasant type. I don't say he could tip the balance against us, unless he had outside help, but I'm glad he's not here to try.

SURREY *(carefully)*: I see. Well, I gather—and I'll know more about it in a day or two, that certain representations have been made to the State Department in Washington about some of these undeveloped territories now controlled by your organisation. At the same time some of us at the Foreign Office have been having some discussions with the Colonial Office—and we feel that we agreed to this UNUTO control rather hastily—it was when the Minister was running the United Nations rather hard, you remember—and perhaps we agreed without entirely envisaging——

FORTROSE *(cutting in, firmly)*: Let's use plain words, Surrey. The public isn't listening. You'd like some undeveloped territories back and you're ready to do a deal with Washington, where they have similar ideas. About this island possibly?

SURREY: I've heard nothing about Corabana—yet. Not worth bothering about, probably. *(Pause.)* That young American—Dayton—what's he doing here? Just amusing himself?

FORTROSE *(rather grimly)*: He does that in his spare time, chiefly in Jill's company. But he also happens to be an expert mineralogist, who disappeared for days into the hills in the north of the island. I know rather more about him than he thinks I do.

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SURREY (*carefully*): If things got difficult here, and you reported unfavourably in good time, and Washington had to take over again, we could do the same elsewhere—and we could explain at Lake Success that the UNUTO idea, as we warned them at the first, was too premature. In that case, well, nobody would blame you—and if you didn't want to return to the Colonial Office then something else could be found for you——

FORTROSE (*cutting in, rather harshly and rising*): Don't say any more. It's only fair to warn you.

(*Enter ANN L.*)

ANN: Oh—I'm sorry. But there's an important message come through from the North Section.

FORTROSE: In about ten minutes, Ann, please.

(*She goes out L.*)

SURREY: I don't quite understand your attitude, Fortrose. I'm not usually considered indiscreet. I was suggesting what our policy might be, chiefly for your own personal guidance. And I see no harm in indicating the broad lines of official British policy to a British Civil Servant.

FORTROSE: But I'm not a British Civil Servant. I stopped being one two years ago when I accepted this job with UNUTO.

SURREY (*with touch of contempt*): My dear chap—what's UNUTO? Here today and gone tomorrow.

FORTROSE: We shall most of us be here today and gone tomorrow unless we can make these United Nations agencies work. It's our only chance——

SURREY (*rather impatiently*): Well, we won't argue about that——

FORTROSE: No we won't. (*Pause.*) I'd like to tell you about a little ceremony here this morning. It often happens. In fact, every time there's a new arrival on our staff. This morning there were two. A young Norwegian educationalist who's gone to one of Chu's remoter schools. And a young Indian doctor who'll work under Melnik. A Norwegian with a Chinese, an Indian with a Czech, all on a Caribbean island. The beginning of a new world. I reminded these two youngsters, though they didn't really need it, that now they were servants of an international order, new kinds of men. And then they read out and signed—(*going to desk as he says this*) the usual Declaration. Here it is, Surrey. Listen. (*Reads carefully but not too solemnly.*)

"I solemnly undertake to exercise in all loyalty and discretion the functions entrusted to me as a member of the staff of the Organisation, to discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with its interests alone in view, and not to seek or accept from any government or other authority external to the Organisa-

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tion any instructions in regard to the performance of my official duties."

How could I ask those youngsters to read and sign that Declaration, and then listen to you? While the United Nations Organisation exists and I'm its servant, then I work for it and fight for it and for nobody else.

SURREY: And go down with it too?

FORTROSE: Yes, but there wouldn't be anything specially heroic about that. Most of us would go down then. And if I have to go down, I'd rather go down with the lifeboat than with the wreckers.

*(Enter ROSA L.)*

Rosa—you ought to have gone home.

ROSA *(embarrassed)*: No—it's all right, thank you, sir. I said I didn't mind doing late duty tonight.

FORTROSE: Well don't overdo it. And tell Miss Westfield to come in and wait for me. And then open this room a bit and clear the air, and make that desk look a little more like business and less like debauchery.

ROSA *(smiling)*: Yes, sir.

*(As she goes, FORTROSE turns to SURREY, who is standing, ready to go.)*

FORTROSE: Come along, my dear chap, and I'll see if you've everything you want.

SURREY *(moving slowly)*: Oh—you needn't bother—especially if you're busy.

FORTROSE *(moving with him now)*: We're always busy here. But Jill's probably gone off to her yacht, and besides, we haven't had any gossip yet. Old Egerton—for instance—what's the latest?

*(They are now out of door R. After a moment, ANN enters L. carrying some papers, with ROSA following. As ANN stares thoughtfully at her papers, ROSA takes some glasses and a plate from desk to tray on small table.)*

RIBERAC now enters R. He holds himself well but nevertheless is rather tight.)

RIBERAC: Ann—sweet Ann—Edward just told me there is an important message. He is about to restore his distinguished fellow-countryman, Sir George, to his glass case, before sending him back to the British Museum.

*(ROSA, who is now opening windows or doors at back, suddenly giggles.)*

Rosa! Rosa!

ANN *(reproachfully)*: Louis! I believe——

RIBERAC: No—but Melnik gave me some of his rum. I think there is ether in that rum. But what is this important message?

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ANN: Walt.

RIBERAC (*teasingly*): Rosa, my darling—what are your cultural activities at present? Are you reading Tennyson or Wordsworth?

ROSA (*shyly*): No, Mr. Riberac. I am reading Shelley now.

RIBERAC: Shelley? Oh—you must be careful. Dangerous poet. Not a good British Council type at all.

ROSA (*looking at him shyly, adoringly*): Please—Mr. Riberac—you mustn't tease me.

ANN: All right, Rosa. And listen for the bell. We may want you again soon.

(ROSA nods and goes. ANN looks with serious reproach at RIBERAC.)

You mustn't tease that poor child, Louis. Don't you realise she's crazy about you? Really in love—it's pathetic.

RIBERAC (*wildly, bitterly*): Love—love—yes, it's pathetic. Nearly everyone here is in love with somebody else who is in love with somebody else. Little Rosa with me, as you say. Edward with his Jill, who is in love with whoever she happens to be sleeping with——

ANN: Shut up, Louis——

RIBERAC: And you, poor Ann, with our noble Edward——

ANN (*furious*): You devil—be quiet. (*She glares at him, and he shrugs and smiles.*)

RIBERAC (*apologetically*): I am sorry, my dear Ann. I did not want to hurt your feelings.

ANN (*softly*): You wouldn't know what love means.

RIBERAC (*gravely*): Not any more. Once. There was a man—there was a girl—I loved them both. We were all in the Resistance together.

ANN: What became of them?

RIBERAC: The Gestapo—and then they disappeared. They have not even any graves. They are merely dust blowing about the ruins of Western Europe, of civilisation. Ann, it is you who do not know what anything means—only in books and the *Atlantic Monthly*. You do not know what it is to be hollow inside—with Dr. Goebbels still whispering there. So that you wonder if they did not win after all. And wonder sometimes if you did not die too, for often now I seem to have no real existence. (*More lightly.*) That is why so many of us Europeans are existentialists, in spite of the fact that it is really a Nazi Occupation philosophy. It tells us we exist. How wonderful!

ANN (*sympathetically, impulsively*): Louis—this just means—that I'm sorry.

(*She kisses him lightly on the cheek. Suddenly overcome, he seizes both her hands and bending forward presses his forehead against them.*)



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RIBERAC (*repressing his emotion*): Forgive me. I had a sister who used to kiss me like that. They shaved her head and stoned her through the streets. (*Cooler now, very bitter.*) Nice patriotic people! The Common Man. The Common Pig. The Common Rat. The kind we work for. Now do you understand why I cannot share your charming enthusiasm, my dear Miss Westfield? I work here for eight thousand five hundred dollars a year and allowances, and for nothing else.

ANN (*looking at him steadily*): Or is this Goebbels whispering again?

RIBERAC (*after a shrug*): I suppose women will never learn not to turn men's confidences into weapons against them. It is too much to ask. Well—our truce is over.

(*Enter FORTROSE briskly. He has now dropped his social manner.*)

FORTROSE: What is it, Ann?

ANN (*much the same manner as his*): Munro has had a report from his sergeant in the North Section that Vezabar has just arrived there. They think he must have landed from a small boat sometime yesterday. He addressed some kind of meeting last night.

FORTROSE: Is Munro still in his office?

ANN: Yes, I told him to wait.

FORTROSE: We'll go round there. (*He rings the bell on his desk.*) I don't want to talk over the telephone. And I'd rather he didn't come here. This is serious. It's not only that Vezabar is dangerous—but—

RIBERAC (*pointedly*): Who landed him? How did he get here?

FORTROSE: That's it, Louis.

(*Enter ROSA, who has a large office book with her.*)

Ah—Rosa—what are you doing?

ROSA: Entering up the cable book, sir.

FORTROSE: Then stay here, please, and enter it up. And listen to the private 'phone—say I ought to be back within an hour. (*Moving, with ANN.*) Coming, Louis? Or would you rather go home?

RIBERAC (*moving too*): Home? It is only our grandchildren who will have a home—and I shall not even have any grandchildren.

(*The three go out R. ROSA has now sat down with her cable book not behind desk but modestly near it, leaning book against edge, on downstage side. Distant and very rhythmical music can now be heard coming through window or door at back.*)

(*Then we see FELIPE, a young Corabanian, peeping in at ROSA.*)

FELIPE (*calling softly, cajolingly*): Rosa—Rosa!

(*She looks up startled, sees who it is, then shakes her head and goes on with her work.*)

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*(She ignores him. The music is a trifle stronger as the CURTAIN comes slowly down.)*

### SCENE II

*(After a short interval to make absolutely necessary stage changes—and during this interval the house lights are not turned up—curtain rises on same scene. Morning, two days later. The lighting should be quite different from first scene, and should suggest dazzling sunshine outside. Flowers have gone from desk, along with all party “props”, and general appearance should be more business-like than in previous scene.)*

FORTROSE is seated behind his desk. ANN is seated downstage L. of desk, and RIBERAC and CHU are right of desk. All have documents and notes in front of them. They can be more informally dressed than in previous scene—men without coats, etc. They are in the middle of an official meeting, and for a few moments after rise of curtain they can be glancing through their papers and making a note or two.)

FORTROSE (as if dismissing last item on agenda): All right then. That's that. Now what's your report, Professor Chu?

CHU (glancing at notes): I arrived in Northern Section yesterday afternoon. One establishment—at Tramulco—already broken into on previous night and much equipment destroyed and books missing. Miss Struer—Danish lady, golden hair—very nervous—and so have sent her away to other side of island. You approve of this measure?

FORTROSE: Yes of course. The poor girl came here to do fundamental education not guerilla warfare. Now what happened last night?

CHU: Other establishment—at Santa Rosa—completely destroyed by fire. Everything there is lost. New young Norwegain—Mr. Johanson—very brave—very good—and some pupils try to help him. Two nice pupils hurt—one young man, one lady—by falling beam. Now in hospital.

FORTROSE: I've already had the police report—but I always discount some of their stuff because they've such a passion for melodrama. What's your opinion? Any possibility of that fire being accidental?

CHU: No, there were careful preparations made for this fire. Afterwards in the village there was some boasting by bad drunken characters about their share in these preparations. Much more rum

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to drink than usual at Santa Rosa and also Tramuco. And this too I think is no accident.

ANN: Karen Bauer reported the same thing.

FORTROSE: The police have it too. You wouldn't say, then, that all this is the result of a sudden and passionate dislike of fundamental education?

CHU: There is plenty of mistrust of education among older ignorant peasants, as we know. But these are elderly people who sit and grumble. They do not break down doors—they do not set fire to valuable building and equipment. I think this is all part of plan to create disturbance and so discredit Undeveloped Territories Organisation.

ANN: It's Vezabar of course.

CHU: He has been mentioned more than once in boasting by bad drunken characters.

FORTROSE: Unfortunately, boasting by bad drunken characters doesn't really give us the proof we want.

RIBERAC: What about these meetings?

FORTROSE: I gather he's produced a highly inflammable brand of Corabian nationalism. But then he's a politician, and politicians like to talk that stuff. And unless he's deliberately inciting his audiences to destroy UNUTO property, we can't take any action against him. It's not unlawful to be a bad old-fashioned orator.

ANN (*impatiently*): But all this has flared up since he arrived. And he didn't come openly. Who landed him?

CHU: And where does this money come from? I am told that Vezabar is not a rich man.

RIBERAC: He was not the type to be a poor man while he was in the government here. So he may have some money—how do you say it?—yes, salted away.

FORTROSE (*slowly*): I wish I thought that was true, Louis. It would simplify things considerably. But—well, there's our friend Nils Dayton, for instance.

RIBERAC: Dayton has been staying down here—mostly on that yacht—ever since Vezabar arrived.

FORTROSE: Yes. But then again—there's that yacht—and the mysterious Mr. Lerma, who, by the way, hasn't paid me his promised visit yet.

ANN: You could go and see him.

FORTROSE: I could—but I think it wouldn't be a good move. If he comes to see me, there's more chance of his showing his hand. If there's anything to show, of course, and he's not simply a rich old globe-trotter.

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CHU (*significantly*): I have heard of this Mr. Lerma—and so I think not.

FORTROSE: And I think not too. (*Looks towards door R.*) This sounds like Melnik.

(MELNIK *makes a noisy entrance R. He looks dishevelled and weary, as if he had been up all night. He is excited and angry.*)

MELNIK: I have saved my big clinic at Parima—but the other two are gone—finish. All the year's work Durand and Miss Sayers did for research on island fever—gone—finish. (*He flings himself down on a chair, mops his face.*)

FORTROSE: That's too bad. I'm sorry, Melnik.

MELNIK: There's no time to be sorry. Action—action—action! Give me a cigarette, Louis.

(*He takes a cigarette from RIBERAC, lights it and puffs furiously.*)

FORTROSE: You've done a report?

MELNIK: Later—later. You shall have lists of everything gone—finish. But first I say we must have action—a militant campaign. See—I catch a man—and the sergeant holds him in the little back room of the clinic. I show him surgical instruments. You talk now, I say, or I cut off a leg, then an arm. His face is green. His teeth go bang-bang-bang, the foolish pig. But he talk. Oho—he talk. (*He looks triumphantly at FORTROSE.*) Vezabar! Yes—yes—yes—Vezabar! It is this Vezabar who talk to him in secret, give him rum, some money, promise more rum, more money, all to make plenty of trouble for these United Nations foreigners who would soon have to leave Corabana.

FORTROSE: This fellow could have been lying, you know.

MELNIK: With his face green—his teeth banging? Never, never! He told me the truth, all he knew. We are wasting time to discuss such a thing. It is now this Vezabar, this reactionary, this counter-revolutionary swine, this tool of big capitalist—and there is only one thing to be done with him.

FORTROSE: And what's that?

MELNIK (*now with quiet ferocity*): Liquidate him.

ANN (*startled*): Kill him——?

MELNIK: Yes, kill him—kill him dead. Liquidate. Finish!

CHU (*thoughtfully*): Yes, I think that would be very wise thing to do with this man.

FORTROSE (*surprised*): What—you too?

(*CHU nods and smiles. FORTROSE now turns to MELNIK.*)

We couldn't possibly do that, you know, Melnik.

MELNIK (*passionately*): If you cannot do it, if police cannot do it—then I will do it. Yes—it is simple. This Vezabar is sick—he does not

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know it but he is sick—with dangerous infectious disease. Dr. Melnik must treat him—and at once. So Dr. Melnik treats him—and he dies. What a pity!

(RIBERAC rises, looking at his watch.)

RIBERAC (to FORTROSE): I am sorry but you will have to excuse me. I have an appointment at eleven-thirty.

FORTROSE: All right, Louis.

(RIBERAC goes. FORTROSE turns to MELNIK, smiling.)

You've been up all night and had a long trip back. You're tired. And you're angry because some promising research material has been wantonly destroyed. I'm desperately sorry about that. It was our job to give you and your staff better protection. Have a bath, a drink and a meal, and then turn in.

MELNIK: Very nice. And then I am different man, eh?

FORTROSE: I hope so.

MELNIK: Liberal sentimental man—play the game—eh?

FORTROSE (steadily): Again—I hope so.

MELNIK (quieter now): Let me tell you. I am tired—I am angry—I am dirty—all right. But I am speaking now with cold reason. This Vezabar—I know about him. He has been sent here to make all the trouble he can, so they say “UNUTO is no good. America must take over the island again—or have nice little crook republic depending on American Capitalism”. So—what do we do with this man Vezabar? Send him away from Corabana? He will come back. Put him in prison here? He will be a hero—and soon they rescue him. No—there is only one thing to do—liquidate him, and dam' quick—finish!

ANN (protesting): But Dr. Melnik, it's impossible. We couldn't do such a thing.

MELNIK: There is a syphilitic rat—a malarial mosquito—what do you do?

ANN: That's not the same thing.

MELNIK (ignoring her interruption): A leg has gangrene—so to save the whole body we cut off the rotten leg.

ANN: And that isn't the same thing either. This is a man—a person—

MELNIK (with more vigour): So—you think I care nothing about men—about persons? Do I not try to help them all the time?

ANN: Yes, of course, but—

MELNIK: What was the good work that was destroyed last night but helping men—helping persons? What will happen to the people of Corabana if we have to leave them? Why does Professor Chu, who is so nice, so kind, so gentle, agree with me about this Vezabar? I will tell you. Because once he had a large and loving family—many brothers, sisters, uncles, cousins—and now he does not know where

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they are or what has become of them, like millions and millions of other Chinese. And why? Because forty or fifty important gentlemen in Japan wanted more power, more money. And if they had been liquidated in time——

ANN: But you can't start murdering people——

MELNIK (*vehemently*): It is better that one guilty wicked man should die——

ANN (*with force, cutting in*): Yes, if he's been legally found guilty——

FORTROSE (*asserting himself*): All right, Ann. Leave this to me. (*He regards MELNIK steadily for a moment.*) Look, Melnik, we're not pretending to be better than you are; probably if we'd suffered what you suffered during the war——

MELNIK (*grimly*): You would have died of horror.

FORTROSE: It's quite possible. That's why I don't propose to take a high moral line about this. But what you propose is quite unthinkable. It contradicts everything we stand for.

MELNIK: Does it contradict the welfare and happiness of innocent decent people?

FORTROSE: Yes—in the end it does.

MELNIK: Because you save them from exploitation—from robbers and Fascist swine?

FORTROSE: Because you're beginning to misuse power. First, this man is really dangerous to the community. So blot him out. Then this other man *might* be dangerous. So he must go. Then another man merely disagrees with you. So you might as well get rid of him. And down the slope to Hell you go. You have seen it for yourself.

MELNIK (*vehemently*): I have seen millions starved, tortured, murdered, because a few evil men were not killed as you would kill a diseased rat.

CHU: That is very true. And it is possible to be too sentimental. It is charming but sometimes it is not wise.

MELNIK: I am a doctor. I try to save life. Why? Because I have for life—this flower of blood and brain—a great tenderness and a great hope. The day will come when it will be beautiful—as the poets have dreamed. But until then, we must be strong and watchful—and use the surgeon's knife to cut away all that is rotten and bad. And if not, then what do we do with this Vezabar then? Send him pretty flowers—give him a drink—tell him not to be a bad boy?

FORTROSE: If I thought that would save our work here, I'd try it. But I imagine something a little stronger will be necessary. But not murder. Bad means make worse ends. You'll let me have your report as soon as possible, please.

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MELNIK (*preparing to go*): Yes, and I will check my supplies at the stores this afternoon, to see what can be spared for the North Section. (*To CHU, who has also risen.*) Come, my friend.

(CHU *nods and smiles and they move slowly towards door R.* FORTROSE *makes some notes at his desk. Then at door MELNIK turns.*)

(*gravely*): One word more—if you please.

FORTROSE (*looking up*): Yes?

MELNIK (*with some gravity*): This is not more arguments. Finish! But remember—please—this is not nice Civil Service work in London. And in some places—fine delicate feelings are too great a luxury. I think you are making a bad mistake. I feel it here (*pats his heart*). I am unhappy about it. More unhappy than I can understand.

(*He goes out R., following CHU who leads. FORTROSE looks at ANN, tries to grin, but sees that she is looking worried and miserable.*)

FORTROSE (*quietly, after a pause*): What's the matter, Ann? You unhappy too, more than you can understand?

ANN (*with suggestion of emotion*): Not more than I can understand.

FORTROSE: All this wretched business?

ANN: Partly that.

FORTROSE: What else?

ANN: Two weeks ago I wrote privately to MacDowell—it was he who first suggested I should come to UNUTO—asking him if I could be transferred to another unit.

FORTROSE (*astonished*): Transferred? But why, my dear Ann? I couldn't possibly do without you. Why should you want to leave us? And why didn't you tell me?

ANN (*turning away from him*): I felt—I needed a change.

FORTROSE (*still staggered*): Good God! You were the one person I thought I could depend upon.

ANN (*muffled*): Oh—don't.

FORTROSE (*getting up and coming round to her*): Look here—what's the matter?

ANN (*shrinking as he approaches*): No—please—don't touch me.

FORTROSE (*staring at her*): All right. I was only going to venture a comradely pat.

ANN (*half angry, half emotional*): I don't want a comradely pat. No woman ever wants a comradely pat. Either take hold of us or leave us alone.

FORTROSE: I was hoping to depend upon you more than ever now.

ANN: That's the point. Can't you see? If I'd known we'd find ourselves in trouble so soon—

FORTROSE: You wouldn't have asked for the transfer. Well, there's

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nothing to worry about. MacDowell will probably ask me. As a matter of fact, you ought to have asked me.

ANN: I know, but I couldn't. And I told MacDowell you hadn't to be brought into it.

FORTROSE: But I have to be brought into it. Unless you feel you can't work with me any longer, and if so then you ought to have talked to me first before you wrote to MacDowell. I don't like this, Ann——

ANN (*staring up at him sombrely*): I don't like it either—any of it.

(*As they are staring at each other, JILL enters briskly R. She is wearing another dress, but looks equally charming.*)

JILL (*brightly*): I hope I'm not interrupting anything very important——

FORTROSE (*swinging round, embarrassed*): No—we were just——

JILL: The point is, Nils Dayton has just arrived with his friend Mr. Lerma, who's anxious to meet you.

FORTROSE: And I'm rather anxious to meet him.

JILL (*coming in as FORTROSE begins to move*): I left them on the veranda. Bring Mr. Lerma in here. And tell Nils I'll join him in a minute.

(*By the time she has said this, FORTROSE has gone out R. ANN has now risen, and the two women look at each other.*)

ANN: Well?

JILL: There seems to be a lot of emotion in the air here. What's it all about?

ANN: I nearly told him. I wish I had now.

JILL (*coolly*): Told him what?

ANN: That I can't endure it here any longer—because——

JILL: You want him so badly.

ANN (*angrily, but not loud*): Because I hate to see him wasting himself on a woman like you.

JILL: Perhaps he doesn't know he's wasting himself. In fact, I'm sure he doesn't.

ANN (*urgently*): You don't even try——

JILL (*coolly*): I'd stop now if I were you. I'm not annoyed. The trouble is—that as they can't teach these things in colleges; you don't know what you're talking about. Why don't you take the man yourself and have done with it? At least you'd learn *something*.

ANN: You make me sick.

JILL: Nonsense! It's life that makes you sick. You only want to read about it, not live it.

ANN: Those other two were bad enough——

JILL: Oh—you knew about them, did you? But then I suppose everybody did.



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ANN: But Dayton—

JILL (*cheerfully*): He might be rather a brute, eh?

ANN (*scornfully*): You ought to know.

JILL: Actually I don't. I'm not his mistress, you know, though you all think I am. So far—for once—I've kept him at a fair distance, though it's been hard work and of course it can't last. Not intended to. I must make up my mind one way or the other—soon. I shall tell Edward myself, so, for your own sake, don't you rush in and tell him, because if his pride is hurt then he'll also dislike you for helping to hurt it. Whereas, if you say nothing, look innocent and startled if he confides in you, then anything might happen. By the way, I hear that poor old UNUTO is having some trouble?

ANN (*bitterly*): I suppose you're delighted.

JILL: Certainly. The sooner you're all back home, not doing good any more, the better I'll be pleased.

*(She swings round as FORTROSE enters R. with LERMA. The latter is an elderly Latin-American, slight, rather frail, with thin brown face, thick white hair and a gentle fastidious voice and manner. He is thus totally unlike the popular conception of the big capitalist. He is in yachting clothes of a conservative type. He smiles at JILL, who raises her voice cheerfully.)*

I'm just saying that the sooner all these UNUTO people go home and stop doing good to the world, the better I'll be pleased.

FORTROSE: My dear, Mr. Lerma may not understand your particular brand of humour.

ANN (*sharply*): I wish I didn't.

*(She makes a quick determined exit L.)*

JILL (*amused*): Lord help us—how that dreary young woman hates me!

FORTROSE (*sharply*): No, Jill—

*(He gives her a quick look and she raises her eyebrows at him.*

*LERMA, a tactful man, smoothly intervenes.)*

LERMA (*to JILL*): You and Nils, I think, are lunching with me on my little yacht.

JILL: Yes. Lovely. And don't call it little. (*To FORTROSE.*) You ought to see it, Edward. Palatial—that's the word, isn't it?

LERMA (*turning to FORTROSE*): But why don't you? Why not join us for lunch, Sir Edward?

FORTROSE: Wish I could. But I must grab a quick bite here and then dash up to the north of the island, where we've been having a little trouble.

JILL: Nils and I will be waiting for you on the veranda, Mr. Lerma.

FORTROSE (*indicating armchair*): I think that's fairly comfortable.

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LERMA (*sitting down*): Thank you.

FORTROSE: Cigar—or cigarettes——?

LERMA (*delicately*): No thank you. I gave up smoking many years ago. It spoils the palate not only for wine but for good food also.

FORTROSE (*lighting a pipe or cigarette*): For the sort of food and wine I've had these last few years, you need a spoilt palate.

LERMA (*smiling*): Ah—yes. But some of us have been more fortunate. You enjoy the good things of life, though?

FORTROSE: Very much. When I can get at 'em. I'm no ascetic, if that's what you mean.

LERMA (*with soft precision*): I am myself something of a *gourmet*, though I eat and drink little these days. But it must be—the best that can be obtained. It is the same with my pictures.

FORTROSE: Ah—yes—you were going to tell me about your pictures.

LERMA: I have a few worth seeing in my little apartment in New York but the best are in my villa at Guernavaca. Do you know Guernavaca— it is not far from Mexico City?

FORTROSE: No, but I've heard of it. Some of the old Capri gang are now there, aren't they?

LERMA: Possibly. It's quite a little centre—and I have a charming villa. My collection there is not large, but I flatter myself it has been put together not without a certain taste. Some of the best Matisse. Picasso of the middle period. Modigliani. Marie de Laurencin. Derain. Rouault. And the Impressionists, of course. And some of the best work of our Latin-American painters, unknown to you probably, Sir Edward, but not to be despised.

FORTROSE: I wouldn't think of despising them. It sounds a wonderful collection.

LERMA: I hope I shall have the pleasure, one day, of showing it to you—and to Lady Fortrose, who is—if you'll allow me to say so, as charming and witty as she is beautiful. Ah! (*he sighs.*) This is a very unpleasant world, my dear Sir Edward.

FORTROSE: Parts of it are.

LERMA: Most of it is. But to acquire a few exquisite choice things—to retire with those things into some green and sunny place, far away from the squalor of industry and the sordid cares of business—then occasionally to show these beautiful things to a few well-chosen friends—well, that seems to me as much happiness as a man can expect in this world.

FORTROSE (*not aggressively*): And a great deal more than most people get, of course. Though there are other ways of being happy quite different from all this exquisite tasting and retiring and connoisseuring with the chosen few.

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LERMA: Ah—but then you are still young—comparatively. And at your age there is still the enjoyment—of power.

FORTROSE: No doubt. Forgive my curiosity, but aren't you, among other things, the president of a very formidable corporation known as Pan-American Alloys?

LERMA: I am. And rather a lazy President, these days.

FORTROSE: With that—and other things—you must know something about power.

LERMA (*smiling*): Enough not to care very much about it any longer. Providing, of course, that I can live the kind of life I prefer. Naturally I insist upon that.

FORTROSE: Naturally, not many people can do that, can they?

LERMA: Not many people really want anything much better than what they have got. There I would agree with Lady Fortrose and, I imagine, would disagree with you, my dear Sir Edward.

FORTROSE: My dear Mr. Lerma, it's only my politeness, such as it is, and my sense of the short space of time at our disposal, that prevent my disagreeing with you very sharply indeed.

LERMA (*laughing softly*): Quite so. But I am glad you have heard of Pan-American Alloys.

FORTROSE: That's not surprising. But why are you glad?

LERMA (*slowly*): I have a suggestion to make. But first let me tell you a secret. And this is to show how frank I am being with you. Here is my little secret. Those of us who are responsible for such large enterprises as Pan-American Alloys—we are often called Big Business—are worried, really anxious, because now there seems to be a disturbing shortage of genuine executive ability in the world. We can fill our less important posts easily enough, but not our more important and responsible ones. And the truth is, we need men like you.

FORTROSE (*astonished*): Mr. Lerma, you astonish me.

LERMA: But why? You are a well-trained and experienced administrator. You are not afraid of responsibility. I know a good deal about you. I had a report on your record, and have also had some talk with Lady Fortrose.

FORTROSE: The devil you have!

LERMA: The United Nations Undeveloped Territories Organisation pays you twelve thousand dollars a year—tax free, of course—plus a personal allowance. You can join Pan-American Alloys next month and start at thirty-five thousand dollars a year, plus an expense allowance and a bonus.

FORTROSE: Good Lord! For doing what?

LERMA: I would suggest, as a beginning, acting as head of our personnel department. After that—well, we are a very large organisation. We are also a very secure organisation. Infinitely more secure

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as an employer, Sir Edward, than your UNUTO. In fact—UNUTO—well—*(he shrugs)*.

FORTROSE *(quietly)*: Tell me about UNUTO, Mr. Lerma.

LERMA: I am no politician. And these days you can hardly call me an active business man—just——

FORTROSE: I know. Just a lover of beautiful things—and a yacht-owner. But what have you heard about UNUTO?

LERMA: I happened to be in Washington a few weeks ago, and heard rumours there that the UNUTO experiment was not thought, in official circles, to be succeeding—too premature perhaps. So that—well, anything might happen. And nobody is saying that about Pan-American Alloys.

FORTROSE: Not if they want to keep on living the Pan-American way of life, they aren't.

LERMA: One other point. You would not have to remain in this part of the world. And I gather from Lady Fortrose that you do not like the tropics.

FORTROSE: Not much—no.

LERMA: May I ask—what type of country most appeals to you?

FORTROSE *(more for his own benefit than LERMA's)*: I sit here—or go out and stare at the bougainvilleas or the poinsettias or at the dazzling blue sea—eating my heart out for the sight again of a green English fell and a grey stone wall—Home! *(He pauses a moment)*. In less than three weeks I am due for leave—to go home—to go home . . . *(he recovers himself, adding in ordinary tone)*. That is, if the situation here allows me to go.

LERMA: And yet, feeling this—like a poet——

FORTROSE *(lightly)*: Like some poets. We have a kind now that sit in Ritz bars and write like melancholy solicitors.

LERMA: Feeling such homesickness—that is the word, isn't it?—still—you stay here—for twelve thousand dollars a year——

FORTROSE *(rather lightly)*: A new world—and we must have one or we may not even enjoy long what's left of the old world—must have a new kind of man to serve it. I don't count myself a very good specimen. But I feel it's worth trying—in fact, so far as I'm concerned, the only thing worth trying.

LERMA: You are not refusing my offer?

FORTROSE: At the risk of sounding rude—I'm not even considering it. *(Glancing at him sharply.)* But I can't believe you were serious.

LERMA: Certainly I was—and still am. *(He rises.)* Sir Edward, if you are a wise man, you will consider this offer very carefully. And there is not much time.

FORTROSE *(also standing)*: Why isn't there much time?

LERMA: Because—*(breaks off, smiles, then continues in lighter tone.)*

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I hope to sail tomorrow. In two weeks I shall return for a day or two, and that might be your last chance.

FORTROSE (*cheerfully*): I have an idea that you were about to give me some other reason—and then suddenly changed your mind.

LERMA (*smiling, moving slowly nearer door R.*): I am hoping you will change your mind too.

FORTROSE (*moving forward to halt him*): By the way—just one question.

LERMA (*still now, still smiling*): Yes of course.

FORTROSE: Vezabar.

LERMA: Yes?

FORTROSE: Did he—by any chance arrive here in your yacht?

LERMA: He did.

FORTROSE: A friend of yours?

LERMA: Not exactly an old acquaintance.

FORTROSE: Where did you run across him again?

LERMA: At Vera Cruz.

FORTROSE: And he asked for a passage?

LERMA: Yes, and I could hardly refuse.

FORTROSE: Probably not. But why was he landed so secretly on the north of the island?

LERMA: But, my dear Sir Edward, there is nothing secret about it. He explained that he has a small property near the North Coast—at Santa Rosa, I think he said—and as he wanted to see it as soon as possible, I agreed to have him taken ashore near there. Why not? We may not admire the type. But he is not a criminal.

FORTROSE: Isn't he?

LERMA: His papers are all in order. And—perhaps I ought to add—(*he looks hard at FORTROSE as he says this*) he is not without influence either here or elsewhere. The man himself—

(*But he is interrupted by the arrival of RIBERAC at door R. He hesitates as he sees LERMA, who turns.*)

RIBERAC: Oh—I am sorry.

FORTROSE: No, Louis—come in. Mr. Lerma—this is Monsieur Louis Riberac—our financial and economic expert.

LERMA: How do you do? I am interested in these subjects—

RIBERAC: Yes, I know you are.

LERMA (*rather slowly, with a smile*): And of course in UNUTO. I must leave tomorrow, so perhaps you could come out to my yacht this evening for an aperitif.

RIBERAC: Thank you, it will be a great pleasure.

LERMA: About six-thirty then. I will send the launch.

(*As LERMA moves towards door R., FORTROSE moves with him and addresses RIBERAC, who has now moved in, as he goes.*)

FORTROSE: Wait, Louis. And ring for Rosa, will you?

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(RIBERAC nods, and the other two go out R. RIBERAC rings bell on desk, then lights a cigarette and stares thoughtfully at door R., clearly thinking about LERMA. ROSA, after a moment or two, enters quietly L. with notebook and pencil. He does not know she is there at first, and she looks at him adoringly and with longing. Then he turns and sees she is there.)

RIBERAC: Sir Edward asked me to ring for you. He is coming back in a minute.

ROSA (*shyly*): Yes, Mr. Riberac.

(*He looks at her steadily. She glances at him, then stands with downcast eyes. Then he takes from his pocket a little gold brooch.*)

RIBERAC: Hold out your hand, Rosa. (*Hesitating a little, ROSA holds out her hand, looking at him wonderingly. He speaks softly now.*) This is for you, Rosa. A little present. It belonged to my sister. Take it, please. (*He puts it into her hand.*)

ROSA (*flustered*): Oh—but—Mr. Riberac—I can't—

RIBERAC: Of course you can. It is charming, isn't it? You like it?

ROSA (*looking from brooch to him*): Oh—yes—it's lovely. I've never had anything like this—

RIBERAC: Then please keep it. And wear it often. Wear it now. Allow me.

(*He takes the brooch and pins it on. She is wide-eyed and happy. When the brooch is on, and before he can take his hand away, she seizes his hand and kisses it passionately.*)

RIBERAC: No, Rosa.

ROSA (*breathless*): I wanted—to thank you—

RIBERAC (*gently*): I know. But—my dear Rosa—this is really a little goodbye present.

ROSA (*alarmed*): You are leaving?

RIBERAC: I am not going from here—no. But I must go from your thoughts, Rosa. (*She shakes her head furiously.*) I am the wrong man. It is a waste of love.

ROSA (*sadly*): Because I am only—an island girl.

RIBERAC: No—no—no. What is wrong with being an island girl? You are everything that is young and delicious, my dear Rosa.

ROSA: Then why—why——? (*She is ready to cry now.*)

RIBERAC: It is not you who are wrong for this love affair. You are perfect for it. No, it is I who am all wrong, and that is why you must stop thinking about me. I am old—old—

ROSA (*crying a little*): No, you are quite young. Only thirty-three—

RIBERAC: That is what they write on the official forms—thirty-three. But really I am a thousand years old. And I am no longer a man nor yet a woman. I am a ghost. You cannot love a ghost. It is

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a terrible waste. There is nothing there—no sex—no heart—nothing you could enjoy. Only a little clear sad intelligence—and memories of other people and of dead lives—nothing—nothing for a girl. It would be like pouring your rich blood into an ash heap.

ROSA (*crying quietly*): I don't understand you——

(*She turns away to cry. FORTROSE now enters R. and takes in the situation.*)

FORTROSE: All right, Rosa. Come back in about two minutes.

(*She goes out quickly L. FORTROSE turns on RIBERAC, annoyed.*)  
What the devil are you up to with that child, Louis?

RIBERAC: Not what you imagine. I was making beautiful sad speeches to her but she did not understand.

FORTROSE: Well, I wish you'd leave her alone—or make your beautiful speeches after working hours. You went to see the shipping people, didn't you?

RIBERAC (*businesslike now*): Yes—and we can have space up to a thousand tons a month to New Orleans. But Buenos Aires will be more difficult to arrange. I will have a full report ready for our next meeting.

FORTROSE (*at desk now*): Good. Anything else?

RIBERAC: No. (*Hesitates*). Except——

FORTROSE: Yes?

RIBERAC: You did not object to my accepting Lerma's invitation for this evening?

FORTROSE: No, of course not. You ought to enjoy yourself. An exquisite old taster of life, this Mr. Lerma, enjoying delicate sensations, well away from the crowd, in the middle of an iron ring of money and machine guns.

RIBERAC: You do not like him?

FORTROSE: A poisonous old party. Very clever and, I'd say, completely ruthless. So be careful what you say to him.

RIBERAC: Of course.

FORTROSE (*thoughtfully*): Everything points now to a deliberate plan to wreck UNUTO. I fancy Lerma's in it up to his neck and wants us out of this island—he even offered me a job to get me out—although what there is for him and Pan-American Alloys I can't imagine.

(*ROSA now enters L. looking composed again.*)

RIBERAC (*slowly*): I will try to find out. I think Dayton discovered something up in those hills.

FORTROSE (*who is playing with a small shaped paperweight, apparently made of something like green glass—throwing it up a few inches and catching it*): Possibly. But the Spaniards, when they were here, ransacked those hills pretty thoroughly.

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RIBERAC: For gold, silver, copper—yes. But now there are other things equally valuable.

ROSA (*indicating paperweight*): Excuse me, sir—

FORTROSE: Yes, Rosa?

ROSA (*shyly*): What is that made of? Because—there is a lot of it in the hills, my uncle used to say. He used to carve it—like that.

FORTROSE (*examining paperweight*): I don't know what it is. Imagined it to be some kind of glass. Here, Louis. (*He throws it and RIBERAC catches it.*) Do you know what it is?

RIBERAC (*looking at it*): No. But I have often seen this material here.

FORTROSE: Well, try and find out what it is. But don't ask Mr. Lerma.

RIBERAC: Of course not. I shall try to make him talk. Perhaps he will offer me a job too. I will do the shipping report now.

(*Smiles and goes out L.*)

FORTROSE (*to ROSA, who has notebook ready*): Cable to MacDowell, UNUTO, Washington—situation developing here please call me late tonight stop check any lobbying Pan-American Alloys. (*She takes it down. He waits a moment, thinking.*) Cable to Professor Farley, Trinity College, Cambridge, England—what is substance like heavy glass or coarse emerald found in hills here and if possible suggest value and uses stop looks like no Esk Hause—

ROSA (*puzzled*): Esk Hause?

FORTROSE: E.S.K. H.A.U.S.E.—it's a place in the Lake District that Professor Farley and I know very well. Got it? Looks like no Esk Hause for me this year though am still hoping Bless you—Fortrose, UNUTO, Corabana. And send that reply paid.

(*KARAM has now appeared in doorway R. He looks frightened.*)  
Yes, Karam—what is it?

KARAM (*stepping forward, hoarsely*): Senor Vezabar—here.

(*ROSA gives a startled exclamation.*)

FORTROSE (*coolly*): Well, that mightn't be a bad idea. Show him in, Karam.

(*KARAM goes.*)

ROSA (*softly, disturbed*): He is a bad man. Shall I go now, please, sir?

FORTROSE (*quietly*): Not yet. Stand there—with your notebook. I want to see how he takes you. But get those cables off as soon as you do go.

(*A moment's pause, then VEZABAR enters R. He is a powerfully built middle-aged Spanish-Indian. His left shoulder is higher than his right, and his left leg is rather stiff, so that he walks with a slight*



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*limp. He is somewhat gaudily dressed. He speaks with a guttural Spanish-cum-American accent. He has a powerful deep voice and is a formidable type. But though a menacing figure, he must be played solidly in character and not given any melodramatic tricks of voice and manner. He does not wear or carry a hat. He marches straight in, easy and confident, moving straight across towards desk.)*

VEZABAR: Vezabar.

FORTROSE: And I'm Sir Edward Fortrose.

VEZABAR: Yes—I know. (*Looks insolently at ROSA, who is clearly uncomfortable in his presence.*) Island girl?

FORTROSE (*not without touch of humour*): Yes. Now on our staff—Miss Rosa Olacca. Senor Vezabar.

ROSA (*nervously*): How d'you do?

VEZABAR (*grimly*): I spik English also. (*With sudden ferocity.*) Get out!

(*ROSA starts back.*)

FORTROSE (*sharply*): Stay where you are, Rosa.

(*He comes from behind desk on right side, and there is hardly room for him to pass with VEZABAR standing there.*)

Excuse me.

(*VEZABAR rather reluctantly has to step back a pace or two.*

*FORTROSE is now in front of desk.*)

Not a very happy beginning, senor. This is my room, and Miss Olacca is a member of my staff and so doesn't take orders from you—not even polite ones.

VEZABAR (*shrugging*): Know 'er family. I am angry—okay. Why? I don't like to see Corabana girl office clurk for UNUTO. Island girl should stay home—have babies.

FORTROSE: When she decides to stay at home and have babies, we shall do nothing to stop her. But she's young yet. All right, Rosa, you can go now.

(*ROSA goes out L. FORTROSE turns to VEZABAR.*)

Sit down, won't you?

(*VEZABAR sits in largest armchair, sprawling a little, and lights a cigarette. FORTROSE also sits down. This happens during rest of speech.*)

I'm very glad you've come to see us. I'd heard you were back on the Island, and there are several things I want to discuss with you.

VEZABAR: Corabana is my home. I 'ave many relations an' friends here. Some property also. Once I was minister—important man—big shot.

FORTROSE: I know all about that.

VEZABAR: Yes—yes. But Corabana is not your home. You 'ave

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no relations, no friends, no property here. You are English nobleman——

FORTROSE: English nobleman? Certainly not. My father was a doctor in Stockport—but never mind about that. I used to be an English civil servant. Now I'm an international civil servant, and I'm here because the United Nations sent me here.

VEZABAR: How much longer you t'ink you stay here?

FORTROSE (*rather sharply*): Until I'm instructed to leave.

VEZABAR (*grinning*): Not long, I t'ink. That's why I come back. To be ready for changes. I am no fool. I am smart.

FORTROSE (*earnestly*): Then I want you to listen to me—carefully—for a minute or two, Mr. Vezabar. Will you?

VEZABAR: Sure! Costs me not'ing. (*He gives a loud laugh at this. FORTROSE does not even smile but looks steadily at him.*)

FORTROSE (*same earnest tone*): I know something about you. I think you have had very bad luck, and have some reason to feel bitter. When you were a child—and ought to have been at school—you were sent to work in one of the plantation mills. There was an accident and your arm and your leg were permanently injured——

VEZABAR (*angrily*): We do not talk of dis. I am now a strong man—very strong——

FORTROSE: No doubt. But that's what happened. Then afterwards you lost a young wife and a baby——

VEZABAR (*jumping up, very angry*): No one can talk dis way to me. I 'ave suffered very much—but it is all finished now——

FORTROSE (*with authority*): Please sit down. I'm not going to say anything more about your misfortunes. You had bad luck and I'm sorry. (*VEZABAR reluctantly sits down again.*) What I want to point out is this. Those things needn't have happened, and wouldn't have happened if this island had been decently governed. And we're here to see that such things don't happen again—that boys aren't sent to work with rotten old machinery, that young mothers and babies have proper medical care. Now—remembering what you suffered—will you help us?

VEZABAR: No, why should I 'elp you? All dat is done wit'. All right—okay—I 'ad bad luck—but now I am Vezabar. Yes—an' wit' many frien's in Corabana an' odder places. I come 'ome to mind my business. You go 'ome to mind your business. Why you sit 'ere—in my Corabana—talkin' to me of my arm an' leg. my wife an' baby? (*Angrily, shouting.*) Yes—why—why—why? Dis is our Corabana—not yours. We do t'ings our own way in our own place.

FORTROSE (*patiently*): Stop shouting. UNUTO is not here for ever, but until your people have learnt——

VEZABAR (*noisily again*): Yes—yes. Until we 'ave learnt—an'

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you an' odder gringos an' dam' silly bitches of island girls will teach us. Yes—yes. An' make plenty money out of Corabana—

FORTROSE (*coldly*): Corabana doesn't pay for itself.

VEZABAR (*triumphantly*): Corabana pay for itself when me an' my frien's run dis island. Yes—an' soon it pays for itself much better—when UNUTO 'as gone. (*He rises and grins.*)

FORTROSE (*rising*): You're giving yourself away badly now, Vezabar. Well, you had your chance—and wouldn't take it. You've been sent here to make mischief. Already several UNUTO clinics and schools have been destroyed, and if I can find proof that you incited the men up there to destroy our property, I shall have you arrested, tried and, I trust, sent to prison.

VEZABAR: Big talk! I am very frightened. (*He guffaws heartily.*)

FORTROSE: But that's not all. Even if I can't find any proof—even if nothing more happens—I give you just two weeks in which to finish your business here, and after that I shall have you deported from this island. I have authority to do that.

(VEZABAR *stares at him insolently for a moment.* FORTROSE, *as if interview were over, goes to telephone at his desk, sits down and takes up receiver.*)

FORTROSE (*into telephone*): Put me through to Major Munro please. (*Looks across at VEZABAR who has now strolled to door R. where he turns.*) Major Munro, by the way, is head of our Security unit.

VEZABAR (*at first loud and jeering but becoming quieter and more menacing during two speeches that follow*): Aut'ority! Aut'ority! Security! Security! Big talk! In two weeks you send me away from Corabana, where I belong an' you do not belong. Big talk! Sir Fortrose—you kid yourself. Why you think I come here to see you?

FORTROSE (*waiting at telephone*): I've been wondering. (*Into telephone.*) Yes, I'll hold on.

VEZABAR: I ask myself—is big man? Is strong man—tough guy—yes? No. (*He makes a rude derisive noise.*) Kind of man couldn't keep own wife out of odder men's blankets. How you t'ink you manage Vezabar, eh? Better go 'ome quick—play golf game—read books for women. Dangerous 'ere soon. Better go 'ome to nice tea party where you belong. Hasta la Vista!

(*He swaggers out R.* FORTROSE, *who has been listening to him with great self-control, now attends to telephone.*)

FORTROSE (*into telephone*): Oh—I'm sorry, Munro. Yes, this is Fortrose. There was somebody here, a gentleman who was trying hard to make me lose my temper. . . . Never mind, tell you later. The point is, I must visit the North Section today, and I thought you'd better drive me up there . . . Yes, I thought Santa Rosa first . . . Yes, as soon as we can. Say, quarter to two here. By the way,

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it's not suddenly turned colder, has it? . . . I see. Probably a touch of something then. Look—I'll have to be back tonight—I'm expecting a call from Washington—so let's make it half-past one here, or earlier if you can. . . .

*(The curtain, which has been travelling slowly, is down.)*

## ACT II

### SCENE I

*(Scene as before, a fortnight later. The time is late afternoon. It is sunset, and there is a warm but not too bright light flooding the stage and gilding the hills seen through opening at back. But this light begins to fade slowly almost from rise of curtain. This discovers RIBERAC and CHU sitting in silent intimacy. From distance at back can be heard the sound of a guitar played rather slowly and softly giving effect of pleasant melancholy. The whole scene strikes this note. It is some moments before anything is said. The guitar music, which is faded down or brought up very carefully, continues throughout the scene between RIBERAC and CHU.)*

RIBERAC *(quietly)*: Where are your thoughts, my friend?

CHU *(smiling, softly)*: Above our village, on the hillside, was a little old temple, where often we used to go. It was covered with wistaria, and in Spring the slopes above were bright with yellow and purple azaleas. The bells of this temple were very old too, and the sound they made was not very loud but very nice, very charming. When we were children we were very happy there—a long time ago.

RIBERAC: And now it is all gone.

CHU: No, I think it is still there. The village, the hillside, the little old temple—they have seen such change, much trouble. But in China we have a saying “The wind blows, the grass bends”.

RIBERAC *(still quietly but rather harshly)*: But your family has vanished, you are far away, and your happiness has gone.

CHU: I had it here in my thoughts. But there was of course a sadness too. Like a poem. We have many such poems. They are very charming.

RIBERAC *(after a pause)*: I had two friends I loved in the Resistance with me, two who were afterwards caught and killed. There was a time when we all three hid together in the Camargue, at the mouth of the Rhone. And on one of the first mornings there, among the salt marshes and the lagoons, when everything was clear and bright, as if it had just been made that morning, we saw the flamingos, a cloud of pink and scarlet wings, rise into the blue air. And we laughed aloud—for happiness. Afterwards my friends died. I think I died too. So did the world that made us laugh with happiness that morning.

CHU: No, no—the sun still shines on this country you speak about, and the birds still stretch their charming wings. Somebody laughs

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with happiness, no doubt. Remember—the wind blows, the grass bends. Then, when the wind has gone, the grass is upright once more. In China we are like the grass.

RIBERAC: In Europe we can be broken.

CHU: You are still too young. Like children who see the rain falling and think they can never play in the sunshine again. (*A pause.*) Everything that is happening in the world now also happened in China long ago. We are new type of civil servant. In China, three thousand years ago, it was decided to have new type of civil servant.

RIBERAC: But no atom bombs.

CHU: Atom bombs can only destroy and kill. Destruction and death are not new. They were there also in China, three thousand years ago. But it is not the moment for such thoughts. Let us continue to think of more pleasing and poetical things.

*(They are silent for a few moments during which they sit brooding and the distant guitar is faintly heard.)*

Tonight there is a big festival—fiesta.

RIBERAC: Yes. I have arranged to celebrate it myself in a modest way. I am dining with some of the shipping people at Pierre's, and I shall drink a great deal of champagne from Chile, which they will pretend is French, and then some really excellent Courvoisier. In four hours time I hope to be quietly and decently drunk.

CHU (*politely*): That will be very nice.

RIBERAC: You can join me if you wish.

CHU: Thank you, but I think that will not be possible. I have promised to spend this evening with Dr. Melnik, who is very unhappy, I think. And he does not like Pierre's restaurant because it is a centre of reaction. It is possible, I think, to be too politically minded.

RIBERAC: There used to be a vaudeville trick called Sawing a Woman in Half. Now it is no longer a trick, an illusion. You can hear the saw scraping the ribs of the world.

CHU (*smiling, but with touch of seriousness*): That is defeatist talk from United Nations official. We are here to protect those ribs.

RIBERAC: I am off duty now. (*Carefully, behind cover of apparent lightness.*) And there is something else. There are times when we seem to have no more decision, no will to act according to our real desires, but play parts that have been mysteriously allotted to us, like so many pieces on a chess board. And this—I mean here and now—is such a time. Fortrose is late. Melnik has not arrived. We sit waiting here. It is a moment of quiet, of emptiness, before the unknown chess player makes his next move.

CHU: In the East we are accustomed to such fatalism. But in a Western man it could mean something else, something quite different.

RIBERAC: What—for example?

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CHU (*quietly, without accusing tone*): That perhaps you have done something of which you are ashamed, and so try to hide it from yourself.

RIBERAC (*softly, carefully*): And what is this—something?

CHU (*smiling*): No, no, please I am not accusing. I am giving what may be psychological explanation of fatalistic feelings. (*Looks around him. Light has faded considerably.*) It is nearly dark. Shall we turn on lights?

RIBERAC: No, it is better like this. Soon there will be too (*he lights a cigarette*) many lights and too much noise.

CHU: Lights and noise make nice simple people very gay, very happy.

RIBERAC (*slowly*): I am not a nice simple person. (*Pause.*) When you remember that already you are a skeleton, then it is time to drink, which is something no skeleton can do.

(*Enter MELNIK, carrying several small flat boxes. He is in an excited state. Almost immediately he switches on lights that illuminate the right half and centre of stage but still leave desk and left in shadow.*)

MELNIK: Let us have light! That is better. But let us not be clearly seen in light. These must be closed.

(*He goes to close doors/windows at back.*)

RIBERAC: Why should they be closed?

MELNIK (*closing them*): It is safer. Where is Sir Edward?

CHU: We have been waiting for him. For you too. But why do you speak of safety? Everything is quiet, very peaceful.

MELNIK (*coming down*): Too quiet—too peaceful.

CHU: It is the quiet hour before the fiesta begins.

MELNIK (*fiercely*): It is the quiet before the storm. Something stinking dam' bad will happen soon. Counter-revolutionary tactics. Militant reaction. Fascist outbreaks. That is why I bring these—(*shows them the small flat boxes*). Emergency dressings, left by army. Lint—gauze—pads—morphia. One for you—(*gives one to CHU*).

CHU (*accepting it*): Thank you—but I think such a thing will not be necessary.

MELNIK (*giving one to RIBERAC*): And you—take it. I am not fooling.

RIBERAC (*taking it, with a shrug*): Many thanks. But I need a gin and Dubonnet—not a bandage.

MELNIK: You do not know what you need. I will tell you. But—one moment—I leave a box on the desk here for Sir Edward—(*goes across to desk with it*).

RIBERAC: He will laugh at you.

MELNIK (*angrily*): Yes, yes—no doubt. He has already laughed too

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much. British humour—*Punch* paper. (*Imitating Fortrose.*) *My dear chap!* But we are not in London—in nice Athenæum Club, where I once take tea—very bad.

CHU: But all island is quiet. No more attacks on UNUTO places. No more speeches by this Vezabar. Perhaps he has gone.

MELNIK: I tell you—all too quiet. If little things still happening, that is not bad. But when all is quiet, when nothing happens, that is the time to be careful. It means that plans have been made—for big outbreak. And when is best time?—oh, it is an old trick—I have seen it before—when guard is relaxed for holiday—for fiesta. I smell it—I smell it in the air, my friends.

CHU: Louis feels something too. But perhaps not quite of this kind.

RIBERAC: I do not know of what kind. It is something different I feel—a playing of parts, a sleepwalking—

MELNIK: So—then wake up, wake up! On guard! Action—action! Militant preparations! And I will tell you. Vezabar has not gone. One of my nurses—*island girl*—saw him this morning. He is quiet. He is secret. He makes no more speeches. Why?

RIBERAC: Probably because he has been told to leave the island, and his time is up.

MELNIK: Yes, yes—his time is up, as you say—and tonight there is big fiesta—

RIBERAC: Munro knows all about him.

MELNIK (*triumphantly*): And where is Munro? Ah—now then we say something. I have been to his office. He is not there. He has not been seen since last night.

RIBERAC (*shrugging*): What is that? He is probably amusing himself somewhere with that little brown poule of his—

MELNIK: Indian girl? No—I see her there outside his office—weeping—because he is gone and she does not know where.

RIBERAC (*rising lazily*): He has probably found another. But I had better enquire about him.

(*He crosses to desk and switches on a light there and then quietly telephones. Meanwhile MELNIK goes closer to CHU.*)

MELNIK (*with conspiratorial air*): You spend this evening with me, eh?

CHU: Oh—yes. Louis invited me to dinner but I told him I would be with you and that you do not like to dine at Pierre's.

MELNIK (*with deeper whisper*): No, I do not trust those people. And there are others I do not trust.

CHU: Perhaps that is very wise.

MELNIK (*raising his voice now*): I can be wrong. It is partly instinct, I will admit, but then I have known these Fascist plots before, and



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they are all alike. But if I am wrong—what harm is done? (*Turning to RIBERAC, still at telephone.*) Well? What reply? You are ringing up Munro's office?

RIBERAC (*rather slowly*): Yes. There is no reply at all. Nobody there. But then—(*shrugging and coming away*) do not forget—the fiesta. This is Corabana—not Europe, my dear doctor.

MELNIK: It is the same world, the same epoch—with still the same treachery to the struggling masses—

RIBERAC (*sharply*): No political speech, if you please. And I have never seen the masses struggle yet, except to see who could throw the largest stone.

MELNIK (*angrily*): There are times when you talk like a reactionary—

RIBERAC (*sharply*): There are times when I feel like one.

MELNIK (*angrily*): Then why do you pretend to work here—with us?

RIBERAC (*with breath*): I could tell you, as I have said to others, that I work here simply for eight thousand five hundred dollars a year and allowances. But now I will add this. I work here too in the hope that we can help to produce a few more civilised persons out of your masses.

MELNIK (*also with breath now*): And I tell you—that I am suspicious of talk of civilised persons that keeps out the masses and regards them with scorn. That is not true civilisation, which is rooted in pity and hope for the masses. This earth is the home of Man, all men, and not hotel-de-luxe for a few special persons. (*Going closer and lowering his voice.*) And I tell you another thing—what I have already told Professor Chu—I do not trust you, Monsieur Riberaç—I do not trust you at all.

(RIBERAC looks at him steadily for a moment, then shrugs his shoulders and glances away.)

RIBERAC (*lightly*): I have long since tired of arguing with fanatics.

(*Enter JILL R. She is already dressed for the evening and looks very beautiful and rather excited.*)

JILL: Oh—where's Edward? I suppose you're waiting for him.

RIBERAC: Yes. And we do not know where he is.

JILL: No, and you all look furious—(*turning to CHU, smiling*). No, not you—Professor Chu—you never look furious.

CHU (*smiling*): Seeing you look so beautiful and charming, Lady Fortrose, I am reminded that I need bath and change of clothes. Excuse me, please. (*To MELNIK.*) I see you soon.

(*He goes out R. JILL, still smiling, sits near centre with a deliberate ease and grace that has something almost insolent about it. This is done for the benefit of MELNIK, who is standing glowering*

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*at her. RIBERAC, who notices this and is amused, seats himself down-stage L. of them. MELNIK is standing R. of JILL.)*

JILL (*with insolent sweetness*): I wish you wouldn't glower at me like that, Dr. Melnik. Is it really such a crime in your eyes for a woman to wear pretty clothes and try to look attractive?

MELNIK (*rather taken aback*): I was thinking of other things—more important.

JILL: I don't believe you were. But still—(*breaks off to look at him a moment, then, with cool decision*). Dr. Melnik, it's possible that you and I may never meet again.

MELNIK (*impressed*): So!

JILL (*coolly*): Yes—so! Now when you first came here I did my best to be friendly, as I did with all members of my husband's staff. But from the first you showed that you disliked me. Clearly you hate the sight of me, don't you? Now would you mind telling me why?

MELNIK (*muttering*): It does not matter.

JILL: Probably not, but I'm curious. Do you really believe that all women should wear flat-heeled shoes, dresses like sacks, and have faces like old boots?

MELNIK (*more at ease now*): I think women—whatever their shoes or their faces—should play their part in our struggle in this life.

JILL: I would have thought most women—poor darlings—play more than their part. (*Mischievously*). But not me—of course.

MELNIK: You amuse yourself all the time. No doubt you think that it's very nice for you.

JILL: But *you* don't, do you?

MELNIK: No.

JILL (*sweetly*): But then, I do. And after all it's my life I'm living.

MELNIK (*pointedly, impressively*): That is where you are wrong. I was wrong too. You do not think it is very nice for you. Are you a happy woman? No. Are you a satisfied woman? No. Any one of my nurses—yes, with ugly dresses and perhaps ugly faces—feels better than you do—not so restless—not so hungry in the heart. And this you know yourself—

JILL (*protesting, though hit*): I don't. I never heard such—

MELNIK (*cutting in, triumphantly pointing at her*): Yes, you do. It is written there. You run about, neglect your husband, make mischief, all because you are not happy. not satisfied with yourself. You make men fall in love. What for? You want them? No. Because you must convince yourself it is all right—you are wonderful creature—and all the time you know it is all wrong—not proper woman's life you are leading. Not proper life for anybody. All holiday without work. Life for a child not for woman of thirty-five—

JILL (*jumping up, furious*): And I suppose you think this house runs

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itself—with all its damned lunches and dinners and idiotic cocktail parties! I've even had to plan and run about for *you*—though thank God I won't have to do it any longer.

MELNIK (*ignoring this, sternly*): Women who think of nothing but looking pretty—nice clothes—all very gay, very sweet—should become actress—film star—to amuse thousands of workers in hours of recreation. If not, then become capitalist's plaything—perhaps that is what you plan—but do not expect to last very long. (*Delivers final judgment, impressively.*) Lady Fortrose, the world is now very poor. You are too expensive. We cannot afford you. Good night.

(*He stumps to door R.*)

JILL (*angrily*): Goodbye.

MELNIK (*turning at door, with a grin*): Much better. Goodbye.

(*He goes out.*)

JILL: And then they say women have the last word. What a type! Give me one of those horrible cigarettes of yours, please, Louis.

(*He does, and lights it for her during following speeches, after which she smokes quickly and is restless.*)

I didn't think he'd be able to make me lose my temper like that.

RIBERAC: He is good at it. He made me lose my temper too. (*Looking at her, softly.*) But what did you mean, my dear Jill, when you told him that you might not meet again?

JILL: I'm sorry, Louis, but—(*shrugs*).

RIBERAC: It is no business of mine?

JILL: Quite.

RIBERAC: Then it has nothing to do with UNUTO—eh?

JILL (*surprised*): Good lord—no. What a question!

RIBERAC (*slowly*): I thought that, talking to some of your friends—Dayton, perhaps, you might have heard something.

JILL: What could I have heard?

RIBERAC: Melnik thinks we might have some real trouble—perhaps an organised outbreak—tonight. Because of the fiesta.

JILL: I'd forgotten about the fiesta.

RIBERAC: I thought you liked fiestas.

JILL: I do. I adore seeing people letting themselves go and not giving a damn. And I only hope that UNUTO is booted out of here before they've abolished all fiestas in favour of discussion groups and shows of those dreary little films about innoculating babies and canning pineapples. (*Stops, almost to recover breath, then looks at RIBERAC and grins at him.*) Well, Louis, I don't think you've ever liked me much—I don't believe you really like anybody—but at least I've never had to pretend to you.

RIBERAC: No.

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JILL: Or you with me—um?

RIBERAC: Not much.

JILL (*cheerfully*): I've always suspected you're a bit of a crook. Are you?

RIBERAC: Well, I find it a responsibility to have Louis Ribera on my hands. He has some expensive tastes.

JILL: You need some of your bitter black coffee to make these cigarettes even tolerable.

RIBERAC (*rather dreamily*): Yes—and a tender sunlight—and plane trees—and a *fine*—France. . . .

JILL: Tell me something—honestly now——

RIBERAC: I am always honest with you.

JILL: What do you think of Edward—I mean, in relation to me?

RIBERAC: I think he is too good for you.

JILL: Don't be boring. You're talking like Ann Westfield now. I know I've behaved badly tarting around.

RIBERAC: He is too kind, too generous, too trusting, too sympathetic. He ought to lose his temper—and beat you. You would think that was wonderful.

JILL: No I shouldn't. And you're just being obvious and boring now, Louis. I really don't know why I'm talking to you like this.

RIBERAC: Since I retired from the sexual life everybody talks to me——

JILL: What I object to is being thought a shallow little creature, like some half-witted debutante. I have my own point of view, and it happens to be quite different from Melnik's—and, unfortunately, from Edward's. I don't think what either of them wants is any use to a woman like me. I'm always being told that if they lose, then there'll be another war that will leave the world in ruins. All right, I'll take the ruins. I feel I could live quite happily in them with the right kind of man.

RIBERAC: And I feel it is no longer any use talking. A moment has arrived that I have known before—in June Nineteen-Forty and several times afterwards. Though we may still talk and talk, we will now act according to the mysterious plan already laid down for us.

JILL (*who has been staring at him*): So that is what you feel?

RIBERAC (*looking curiously at her*): Yes. And I see that you feel it too.

JILL (*slowly, almost in a whisper*): Perhaps. Not quite like that, I think. But it's curious. I've been wondering why—I find it so difficult to make up my mind . . . as if I might as well let things slide because anyhow they'll go their own way. . . . (*Pulling herself up a little.*) Does it makes you feel frightened?

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RIBERAC: A little—yes. I need a few drinks. I ought to be having one now.

(Enter FORTROSE R. He is quietly cheerful and brisk, in sharp contrast to the other two.)

FORTROSE (moving towards desk): Oh Jill—Dayton's out there on the veranda. I couldn't talk to him because Melnik's been hammering at me, as if I were a Party meeting.

JILL (going up): Nils Dayton wants to talk to you, Edward.

FORTROSE (cheerfully): But I'm not sure I want to talk to him. I've a lot of work to do, my love. Better take him away and let him sample the fiesta.

JILL (gravely): It's very important. He must see you.

FORTROSE (looking hard at her): You say that?

JILL: Yes, I say it.

FORTROSE (quietly): All right Jill. Please send him along in about five minutes. Enough for you, Louis?

RIBERAC: Yes.

JILL (going R.): All right.

(She goes out R. RIBERAC moves up towards desk.)

FORTROSE (briskly): Sorry I'm so late, Louis. (He can be seen glancing at messages on desk, but not sitting.) Schwaber kept me too long, and then Melnik held me up out there. By the way, he seems to think you're probably quietly selling us out—capitalist pirates' fifth column—you're not, are you?

RIBERAC: No.

FORTROSE: I told him you weren't. I gather you know what Melnik thinks. Quiet before the storm—the *putsch* under cover of the fiesta—Vezabar here—Munro gone. Eh?

RIBERAC: Yes. I think it is mostly exaggeration. The extreme Left, being constant plotters themselves, always see plots everywhere. And that is Melnik.

FORTROSE: And I gather he's left some emergency dressings on this desk. (He sees the box.) Here they are, I suppose. Oh—well, we live in two different worlds, Melnik and I.

RIBERAC: Yes. But I have been in his world too. It really exists, you know.

FORTROSE: Yes, and it will continue as long as men continue to think in terms of power politics. But I can't do this job properly unless I feel that another, saner world is taking the place of his world. Fear and violence can only breed more fear and violence. That doesn't mean, however, as Melnik seems to imagine that I am really asleep in the smoke-room of the Reform Club. What about Munro?

RIBERAC: No reply from his office, but he's probably started his *fiesta* early and told the staff they could go. I know one or two quiet

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little haunts of his, and I may just have time before dinner to see if he is there.

FORTROSE: All right. I shall be here if there is any news. By the way, you never told me that that stuff up in the North Hills was beryl. (*Looks at him sharply.*)

RIBERAC (*rather confused*): Well—I was not quite sure—and——

FORTROSE (*cutting in*): Also, by the way, your friend Mr. Lerma has just arrived again.

RIBERAC (*taken aback*): Has he? I did not know——

FORTROSE (*cutting in*): Yes, the yacht's out there, complete with Mr. Lerma and an appreciation of the finer things of life—and no doubt Matisse and the earlier Picasso in the dining saloon. It was Schwaber who told me you'd been asking him about beryllium, and that's how I guessed. But a friend of mine at Cambridge also suggested that the stuff might be beryl.

RIBERAC (*at ease now*): I do not think it is very important. To extract beryllium from beryl is difficult and expensive, for the yield is very small—only four or five per cent, I am told.

FORTROSE (*dryly*): You were told it by the same article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that I read. But Mr. Lerma and his colleagues in Pan-American Alloys are probably well ahead of that edition of the *Encyclopædia*, which is comfortably out of date. And then again, Louis, what may have been found up there may be actual deposits of beryllium minerals. And my Cambridge friend, who's also well ahead of our *Encyclopædia*, has told me one or two interesting facts about beryllium.

(*There is a knock at door R. FORTROSE calls.*)

Come in.

(*DAYTON enters, remaining near door. He is very carefully dressed.*)

DAYTON: Say—I'm sorry.

FORTROSE (*cheerfully*): No, no, come in. We've finished. Just chatting about beryllium.

DAYTON (*carefully*): Is that so? Good evening, Mr. Ribera.

RIBERAC: Hello—and goodbye. I am just going.

DAYTON (*heartily*): Well, beryllium certainly is wonderful stuff. As we say—out of this world. And try and find it—and then you're dead sure it's out of this world. (*Laughs and comes further in.*)

RIBERAC (*to FORTROSE*): I will look in then later tonight—perhaps quite late.

FORTROSE: Thank you, Louis. Where are you dining?

RIBERAC (*as he goes R.*): Pierre's.

FORTROSE (*calling, jovially*): Lucky man. Tell them to save something for Jill and me—we shall be dining there tomorrow night—probably a farewell feast before we fly home on leave——

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(RIBERAC has turned at the door, staring with concern at FORTROSE and looking as if about to say something urgent. FORTROSE is surprised, then asks quietly.)

Anything wrong, Louis?

RIBERAC (*confused*): No—no. I thought—I had forgotten something. Just stupid. I am sorry.

(He goes out R. FORTROSE, puzzled, looks after him a moment, then turns to DAYTON.)

FORTROSE: Poor Louis seemed rather embarrassed about something. (*Looks again at DAYTON, who is none too happy.*) Incidentally, so do you.

DAYTON: Well—I guess I am.

FORTROSE: Sit down—and then it may all seem less difficult. Leaning back and then stretching out the legs often helps.

(DAYTON sits but does not relax. After waiting a moment,

FORTROSE sits too and looks at him enquiringly.)

Yes?

DAYTON: It's about Jill. (FORTROSE makes no reply, so DAYTON has to continue.) We've been going places—having fun——

FORTROSE: I know you have. It's been very nice for Jill, particularly as I've been so busy.

DAYTON (*staring, suddenly aggressive*): Look—are you kidding? If so—well, I can do it the hard way. Suits me.

FORTROSE: I'm not kidding. And whatever you're going to do, please don't do it the hard way. (*As DAYTON hesitates, adds impatiently.*) Go on, Dayton.

DAYTON: I'm crazy about her. I wouldn't say she's quite the same, but I guess she likes me quite a lot.

FORTROSE (*politely*): I gather she does. So?

DAYTON: I'm leaving soon and I want to take her back to California with me. I've asked her to marry me as soon as she can get free. She hasn't said Yes but she hasn't said No. I'll persuade her all right. I tell you, I'm crazy about her. Never wanted a woman so much. And I can give her a swell time, and that's what she wants—what she needs. You know she doesn't like it here.

FORTROSE: I like it even less—but then we didn't come here for a holiday—and a swell time.

DAYTON (*grimly*): Okay—I'll lay it straight on the line.

FORTROSE: Do.

DAYTON: You're never going to hold her—and if it isn't me, then it'll be some other guy, who may not be able to give her all she wants. Even if you went straight back to England, took some other job and made some real money, I doubt if you could hold her now. Sorry to talk this way——

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FORTROSE (*cutting in, smoothly*): No, that's all right, Dayton. (*He pauses.*)

DAYTON: Comes as a nasty jolt, I know. Had to face it myself once.

FORTROSE (*slowly*): No, that's not the trouble—though the jolt is there, of course. My difficulty is—we don't seem to be talking the same language. Our words sound alike but they have different meanings. Marriage, for instance. You *have* been married before, haven't you?

DAYTON: Twice. First one divorced me. I divorced the second. Just didn't work out either time.

FORTROSE: And why should it work out this time?

DAYTON: Because I'm crazy about her. I told you. Never wanted a woman so much. She's got me——

FORTROSE (*rather sharply*): Yes, we'll take that for granted. But—if you'll allow me to say so, Dayton—you sound more like a child demanding a bar of chocolate than a mature man contemplating marriage. And this talk of marriage not working out, as if it were a mechanical process, makes me wonder if you have the least notion what marriage really is or even what any intimate personal relationship really is. Why—you talk about going off and having a swell time as if you were an adolescent invited to a dance.

DAYTON (*getting up, annoyed*): Oh—don't be such a stuffed-shirt. I didn't come here for a lecture.

FORTROSE (*not rising*): You came here to tell me you propose to take my wife away from me, and I think the least you can do is to listen patiently to a lecture if I should choose to give you one. But I don't. I merely want to tell you that I don't believe you know what a real relationship to a woman is, what love is, what marriage means——

DAYTON (*as he sits, cutting in*): Wait a minute—before you begin to put me wise to it all. You haven't made such a hell of a success of *your* marriage, have you—or else I wouldn't be here.

FORTROSE: No, I haven't—even though I rejected your farmyard-and-swell-time ideas of sex a long time ago——

DAYTON (*impatiently*): Oh—skip it!

FORTROSE (*trying to be patient*): It's been mostly my fault. I realise that. But there are special circumstances in our case——

DAYTON (*cutting in, with a grin*): You bet! There always are.

FORTROSE (*jumping up, in sudden fury*): Oh—don't be such a bloody lout!

(*He moves away, trying to control his temper. DAYTON gets up slowly, watching him, rather pleased that he is now the cooler of the two. After pacing a little, FORTROSE turns up near desk and looks*



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*at DAYTON. He is now in control of himself, and his tone is icy.)*

If my wife decides to go to California or anywhere else with you, clearly I can't stop her—and I wouldn't dream of trying to. But I shan't divorce her so that she can marry you, nor, if it lies within my power, will I allow her to divorce me. And I may add, to show that more than jealousy is involved in this, that if you told me you were trying to marry one of the typists here, I should do all I could to prevent this marriage.

DAYTON (*ironically*): Thanks a lot. Glad to know that you think you own everybody round here.

FORTROSE: I wasn't suggesting such a thing.

DAYTON: No—but it was just one of those little slips that give a man away. The United Nations Big Shot on Corabana. Don't make me laugh. Well, I'm not asking any favours. Don't need to. I came here to talk things over in a friendly style. I thought by the way you've let Jill play around——

FORTROSE (*contemptuously, cutting in*): *Let Jill play around! You talk as if she were a performing poodle instead of a sensitive, complicated, mysterious human being with whom you propose to enter into a most delicate and difficult relationship——*

DAYTON (*more wondering than sneering*): God!—no wonder she says she's bored——

FORTROSE (*furious*): You——

*(But he checks himself because the door R. has been flung wide open and JILL is standing there. She looks at the two men and takes in the situation.)*

JILL (*coming in a little*): I'm sorry but I just couldn't wait out there any longer. I shouldn't have agreed to this. I knew it wasn't the right way to go about it. Idiotic of me. *(She looks from one to the other, trying to keep the situation light.)* Sorry, chaps. You're both furious, aren't you?

*(She looks at FORTROSE, who does not reply but gives her a long, level look. She then looks at DAYTON who gives a slight shrug and a nod towards FORTROSE, as if to suggest the fault is FORTROSE'S. She takes this in.)*

All right, Nils. My turn now.

DAYTON (*protesting*): Listen, sweet, remember what you promised——

JILL: Yes, and I shan't be long, but we can't leave it like this. Go and get yourself a drink—and wait for me on the veranda.

DAYTON: You're the boss.

*(He goes out R. They wait until a moment or so after he has closed the door behind him.)*

JILL (*abandoning the light touch*): Well, Edward?

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FORTROSE (*carefully*): After listening to a lot of childish rubbish about giving you what you want and swell times, I told him that so far as I was concerned divorce was out of the question.

JILL: I thought you would. Why?

FORTROSE: Because I've no intention of helping you to tie yourself to a greedy, possibly cruel, adolescent.

JILL: I don't see him like that. Young for his age—unformed perhaps—

FORTROSE: Well I do. An adolescent who expects his marriages to work themselves out for him.

JILL: He may think like that. I don't. No woman does.

FORTROSE: I know very well you wouldn't have considered him seriously for a moment if it hadn't been for one thing.

JILL: What's that? Money? Thick steaks and thin stockings? Swell times in Pasadena?

FORTROSE: No. I know you better than that. It's because you see him as the opposite of what you've come to dislike in me, of the work we're trying to do here, of a certain way of thinking, feeling, living. He's the enemy. So you've gone over to him.

JILL: There's a room I can't live in any longer, and he's a door out.

FORTROSE: That's not very flattering to him.

JILL: It's probably how most women think of men. And anyhow I don't flatter Nils. Though he's a fine animal.

FORTROSE: But—from what he said—I gather you've not allowed him yet to make love to you.

JILL: No, of course not.

FORTROSE (*gently*): It isn't *of course not*—Jill.

JILL: Oh—why isn't it?

FORTROSE (*slowly*): This dangerous situation wouldn't have arisen if you hadn't kept him at arms length. It would have been much better, Jill, if you had treated him as generously as you did young Napier and van Loren.

JILL (*gasping with surprise*): Edward!

FORTROSE: Yes, Jill?

JILL (*staring at him*): Do you mean to say—you knew all the time about Bill Napier and van Loren?

FORTROSE (*gently*): My dear, by this time I may be a dim grey official, a boring prig, a stuffed-shirt, as Dayton says, but I'm not altogether a fool, you know. It's been my business to know what was happening on this island. As a matter of fact it was I who had Napier transferred and van Loren moved on to another job, before the situation each time became too embarrassing for us all.

JILL (*staring at him, fascinated*): And I thought I knew all about you, Edward. I—I despised you for being so blind and trusting.

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FORTROSE (*gently*): I think you probably despised yourself and then passed it on to me.

JILL (*more urgently now*): But—didn't you care?

FORTROSE (*suddenly revealing himself*): CARE? Good God! I've sat here—late at night—(*but he breaks off. Then he adds quietly.*) But we're not discussing that.

JILL (*impatiently*): Oh—don't talk as if I were on an agenda! Why—why—the very first time you found out—didn't you tell me straight you knew what I was up to? Why didn't you tell me to behave myself or you'd boot me out of the place?

FORTROSE: You'd have hated it.

JILL: I'd have adored it. You too probably. Don't you see that what I couldn't bear was sitting around on the edge of this great dreary UNUTO nonsense, just waiting to be noticed now and again—that I had to be bang in the centre for somebody, to create some excitement somewhere, even if it meant cheapening myself? Specially on this damned treacherous island, where everything's battering at your senses.

FORTROSE (*with increasing note of apology*): I understand about the island. I'd brought you here. I had a difficult and responsible job, which you didn't even appreciate. I was——

JILL (*cutting in, patiently*): Oh—don't be so apologetic. I can't stand it. That's one of the things that's been so boring. And it's one of the reasons why brutes and cads are often so refreshing. They don't bother about being apologetic, but sail right in.

FORTROSE (*coolly now*): Let's talk about Dayton—and not brutes and cads in general. You're not in love with him——

JILL: Not yet. But I might be—if——

FORTROSE (*cutting in*): If he proved himself as good a lover as he is an enemy of everything I stand for. Well, I warn you now, Jill, that he won't be. He's all wrong. At the best he'll be an insensitive greedy snatcher, and he might easily be something worse. It's like offering a violin to an ape. I may have made mistakes but in some ways I understand you better than you do yourself. So I'm warning you——

JILL (*stormily*): I don't take warnings—just be human—and not so damned high-and-mighty——

FORTROSE: I'm trying to be fair. I could easily make an emotional appeal——

JILL (*angrily, in despair*): No, you couldn't. You've forgotten how to. Not on the agenda——

(*At this moment ANN enters briskly from L. She is dressed for the evening, in a modest but attractive fashion. She is in before she realises she has interrupted an intimate scene.*)

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ANN (*taking it in*): Oh—sorry!

JILL (*furiously*): Sorry! Sorry! Oh—for God's sake stop being sorry. Stay here and hold his hand—or take him out and get him screaming drunk—I don't care. Have a good time. I'm going to enjoy my fiesta.

(*She hurries, half-sobbing as she goes, out R. and bangs the door behind her. There is a moment's silence, during which ANN, after an enquiring look at FORTROSE, who does not return it, quietly closes door L. and then comes in.*)

ANN (*quietly*): Well—that's it, I guess. (*After FORTROSE makes no reply.*) I was on my way out to the Barlings' but I thought I'd look in first to ask if you had any news.

FORTROSE (*shaken, but trying to be steady*): No. Munro can't be found, but that's probably nothing. Louis is looking for him. Vezabar's been seen. Lerma's back and Dayton's preparing to leave. May all add up to something. But no real news. Just rumours. Probably nothing but the fiesta atmosphere.

ANN: Island nerves, I guess. I feel it too.

FORTROSE (*suddenly smiling at her*): My dear Ann, you're our rock and shining tower. Thank God you didn't leave me, as you threatened to.

ANN (*trying to smile and keep it light*): Well—we've been told what to do, haven't we? The Barlings don't need me. So—shall I stay and hold your hand—or do we go out?

FORTROSE (*with same attempt at lightness*): I can't go out tonight, my dear Ann. A lot of odds and ends have piled up here that I must get rid of. And if by any chance there should be any trouble—well, then I'm here where I can be found.

ANN: I'll stay then.

FORTROSE: No—no—why should you?

ANN (*with an effort to be steady*): Because you're alone—and I love you.

(*He goes closer to her, looking bewildered and concerned. She shrinks a little, then as he puts out a hand tentatively, she suddenly goes forward and leans against him so that he has to put an arm round her. She bursts into tears against his shoulder.*)

Hold me a minute. Don't say anything. Just hold me.

(*He holds her and broods over her a moment or two, not like a lover but rather paternally. Then she breaks away, and speaks in a muffled voice.*)

Lend me a handkerchief. (*As he does.*) I suppose it's humiliating and I'm making a fool of myself—but I don't care. It had to come out. (*Dabs herself.*)

FORTROSE: You and I, Ann, we're the same sort of people——

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ANN (*urgently*): Of course we are. I knew that from the first. And she isn't. She's all wrong, and you know it. And I've had to watch her cheating on you——

FORTROSE (*rather wearily*): No, I knew. Nobody seems to think I've got eyes and ears—and some imagination—not even you, Ann. Sit down a minute, and let me explain something. Then you must go off to the Barlings.

ANN (*impatiently*): Oh, never mind about them! (*She sits down.*)

FORTROSE (*lightly*): I don't—much. But I'd like you to have a good evening out, my dear. You deserve one. (*A pause. He looks steadily at her. Change of tone.*) Ann, you're the best human being I've met on this job. I'm devoted to you. You're my kind of person.

ANN (*rather bitterly*): But that doesn't seem to be enough. Oh—I don't pretend to be glamorous——

FORTROSE (*cutting in, smoothly*): I wouldn't know. I don't think I'm glamour-minded. But I *do* know that sometimes you look beautiful. However, that's nothing to do with it.

ANN: Of course it has. Why didn't you tell me—if only just once—that I looked beautiful?

FORTROSE (*wryly*): Jill would say that it wasn't on the agenda. And it wasn't. When it flashed across my mind that you looked quite beautiful, we were usually working hard. (*Breaks off, then, gravely.*) Ann, I must explain to you about Jill. I know you don't like her——

ANN (*impatiently*): I hate her—just as she hates me.

FORTROSE (*weightily*): And I love her. I fell in love with her twelve years ago, and I'm still in love with her. And that's as it should be. I must make you understand that.

ANN: Well, you won't. She's so completely and horribly wrong for you—not your kind of person—just the very opposite——

FORTROSE (*slowly*): That's why it's right. She seems to me the best of the other half of everything. She completes life and makes it whole. With her I'm not loving an extension or reflexion of myself, but somebody strange—from the mysterious other side—challenging . . . magical. . . .

ANN (*protesting*): No, Edward. This isn't about real people trying to live their lives together. It's just romantic theorising.

FORTROSE: But perhaps that's the way to live, otherwise you're just desperately improvising a charade. And anyhow I'm trying to tell you—as honestly as I can—what I feel. It seems to me this kind of life is right just because it completes things instead of separating them. Perhaps we're all too busy now loving our reflections and hating all that is strange and outside ourselves, waiting to complete us.

ANN: I've heard you say that before. It may be true. But we're

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talking now about something personal, intimate—about a woman. Oh yes—a beautiful woman too, no doubt—

FORTROSE (*checking her*): Yes, a woman—and to me a beautiful woman. But I've never even seen her beauty as something to be possessed—that's the mistake of men like Dayton, for it can't be possessed—but I've always seen it—

(*He hesitates, finding an image, and now to end of speech he is always hesitating a little, searching for the right phrase, speaking with great sincerity and some shyness, while ANN, as he proceeds, begins crying very, very quietly.*)

as a sort of strange door . . . leading to the other side of things, the enchanted place . . . You see it sometimes in the corner of a picture . . . in a line of verse . . . hear it for a moment perhaps in a string quartet . . . the enchanted place on the other side. . . . And there never has been enough time to go through that door and wonder and admire. But I felt it wouldn't matter even if we had to wait until we were old . . . because her beauty would remain for me when other men could no longer see it . . . and that strange door, would be there, the enchanted country on the other side would still be there . . . So it didn't matter too much—though it might hurt—what happened here between us, so long as at last we could go home together . . . go home . . . There's no home for us now, perhaps not for anybody. Home is tomorrow. But we're beginning to build it today.

ANN (*in sudden despair*): Are we? I've always believed that and worked for it. But now I wonder. We may be deceiving ourselves, and home may be as far away tomorrow as it is today. Because time will take hold of tomorrow, to corrupt and destroy it, just as it has changed and ruined today.

FORTROSE (*very sincerely but with lighter tone*): But that's why it may be better to be a romantic theorist, my dear Ann. The pattern and the plan on which we build—like all that we really and most deeply desire, if we are wise—must not exist in time but in eternity.

(*A pause. She rises slowly and looks at him, pulling herself out of her crying.*)

ANN (*with attempt at lightness*): I guess I'd better go to the Barlings after all.

FORTROSE (*standing, smiling at her*): They'll be disappointed if you don't, especially old Barling—I've seen him looking at you. Have a good night out.

ANN (*about to go, she looks at him steadily and speaks very quietly*): I shall love you as long as I live—my darling. But I shall never mention it again—never call you my darling again—never again. . . .

(*She goes out L. rather blindly. He moves slowly and thought-*

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*fully to open door/window at back. It is now quite dark out there, with perhaps a glitter or two of light, and we hear distantly the sound of gay-melancholy Central American dance music. After listening for a moment he goes and sits down at his desk, preparing to begin his night's work. Slow curtain with some music continuing, as he sits.)*

### ACT II

#### SCENE II

*(Scene as before, several hours later: it looks exactly as it was at end of last scene, with door/windows open at back. There is dance music coming through, but now it is heavier but less clearly heard.)*

**ROSA** *is discovered on stage, sitting below desk, obviously left on duty as she was at end of Scene I, Act I. At back, just visible, is FELIPE. He is calling to ROSA, who is clearly nervous and apprehensive, occasionally shakes her head, but mainly tries to ignore him. She can be doing some small job, such as entering up cable book—as before.*

**FELIPE** *(calling):* Rosa! Rosa! *(Angrily.)* Rosa! Bistamma dubla—inish gratta snarla!

*(He comes forward a little—a Spanish-Indian youth, graceful, picturesque, but rather sinister—and laughs angrily. ROSA jumps up indignantly—obviously to tell him to go away.)*

*At this moment RIBERAC enters R. He has the extremely careful movements and speech of a man who has had a great deal to drink but prides himself on being able to hold it. He is in fact quietly drunk. He takes in the situation at once.)*

**RIBERAC** *(sharply):* No-no-no! Allez vous en! Vamoos! Push off!

*(He moves to opening at back. FELIPE gives last angry laugh as he scuttles away. RIBERAC goes to opening and then just outside. There is a sound of glass breaking and a clatter of stone on wood. ROSA gives an exclamation of alarm and goes up nearer. RIBERAC now turns and comes in.)*

**They are throwing stones now.**

**ROSA** *(anxiously):* They did not hit you?

**RIBERAC:** No. It is not the night for me to be hit with stones. But it is a night when stones will be thrown. The throwers of stones must play their parts. I said so when the sun was setting, hours ago. I say it again now.

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ROSA (*simply*): Are you a little drunk, Mr. Riberac?

RIBERAC: Yes—a little—a little, my dear Rosa. Where is Sir Edward?

ROSA: He has gone to the hospital to see Major Munro.

RIBERAC: Munro? What happened?

ROSA: He had an accident with his car. He is injured.

RIBERAC (*very quietly*): Was it a real accident?

ROSA: Nobody knows yet. Sir Edward thinks it was just an accident—bad luck——(*she hesitates*).

RIBERAC (*softly*): And you do not think so?

ROSA: No. But I know nothing about it. Just a feeling I have, Mr. Riberac.

RIBERAC: Why are you working so late tonight?

ROSA: I preferred to stay here.

RIBERAC: The young man who was here just now is he in love with you?

ROSA (*simply*): He wants me.

RIBERAC: But you don't want him.

ROSA: No.

RIBERAC: Not even—sometimes?

ROSA: Yes—perhaps sometimes. But I know it would be bad if I went with him. I would lose—all this. I would be just an island girl again. Besides—(*she hesitates, then points shyly but proudly to the brooch she is wearing, the one he gave her*)—look——

RIBERAC: The brooch! How charming it looks!

ROSA (*warmly*): It is beautiful. (*She looks at him invitingly.*)

RIBERAC: But it was a Goodbye present, you remember.

ROSA: But all that you said to me then is not true. You are not old. You are not a ghost. You are a young man. You can go out and drink, like young men do. If at first you could not love me very much, I would not mind, because I think that afterwards—it would be better.

RIBERAC: Afterwards it would be better. It is there—and only there—that the realism of women breaks down. And you are wrong, my dear Rosa. This affair would begin badly and end worse. (*As she shows signs of distress he continues hastily.*) I will tell you a secret. In the tropics I do not want to make love. In Paris probably—or even in Birmingham among those beautiful trams—the prospect of making love to you would be delicious. But here I retreat from the sexual life. The whole earth and sea and sky are busy making love—it is too much. Here we must place culture above nature. Are you still reading the poet Shelley?

ROSA: Yes. I like him very much. Don't you?

RIBERAC: No. I think he is too vague, mad and Anglo-Saxon for me. But repeat some of his verse—if you can——



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*(She is not sitting, as she was originally, and she looks hard at him for a moment, as if to discover if he is merely making fun of her. Then, as he gravely returns her look, very slowly and shyly, rather like a schoolgirl, she recites.)*

ROSA: "When the lamp is shatter'd,  
The light in the dust lies dead;  
When the cloud is scatter'd,  
The rainbow's glory is shed;  
When the lute is broken——"

*(She hesitates, then repeats the last line, as if it will help her to remember the next line.)*

ROSA: "When the lute is broken"——

Something about "sweet tones" comes next, but I'm afraid I've forgotten—I'm sorry.

RIBERAC: That is quite all right. It was very charming. But do you know what a lute is, Rosa? *(She shakes her head rather mournfully.)* Well, it doesn't matter. You need not be so sad about it.

ROSA *(mournfully)*: I know I am still only an ignorant girl, Mr. Riberac. But I am trying hard to learn and to improve myself. You have been a great help to me.

RIBERAC *(rather bitterly)*: So—I have been a great help to you—when you try hard to learn and to improve yourself?

ROSA *(steadily)*: You—and UNUTO. You do not know what it means to an island girl like me. It is a new life—opening out like a flower——

RIBERAC *(with sudden harshness)*: No it is not. It can't be. Why do you talk this nonsense to me?

ROSA *(looking at him, stricken, humbly)*: I don't understand. Please—why are you suddenly angry with me?

RIBERAC *(after a tiny pause)*: I am angry with you so that I shall not be angry with myself. It is a common trick, and you have only to give it a little time and it can destroy whole civilisations.

ROSA *(sadly)*: You are too clever for me.

RIBERAC *(with a kind of bitter whisper)*: I will tell you something much worse than that. I am also too clever for myself.

ROSA *(taking him in, calmly)*: You are not a good man, like Sir Edward. But I could make you into a good man.

RIBERAC *(politely but impersonally)*: Now that I am waiting here, you need not stay, Rosa.

*(She rises quietly and moves to L. But just before door she turns and looks at him calmly if coldly.)*

ROSA *(with sad dignity)*: My mother and my grandmother can sometimes see things before they happen. Perhaps I can too.

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Tomorrow you will be sorry you spoke to me like that. It will hurt you worse than it is hurting me now.

*(She goes out. He feels restless, uncomfortable. Music is heard again from back. He goes up and is just closing door/windows, shutting out sound of music, when FORTROSE enters R. His make-up should be paler than it was before. But he is mopping his face, and during opening speech he takes off his coat and puts it over back of convenient chair.)*

FORTROSE: Hello, Louis. It's sticky out tonight. I'm not really hot, yet I feel sweaty. Damned unpleasant!

RIBERAC: Rosa told me Munro is in hospital. I came to tell you I could not find him.

FORTROSE: I've just seen him. Arm broken—head badly cut and bruised—and probably nasty concussion. They wouldn't let him talk. Car went right over.

RIBERAC: An accident?

FORTROSE: Melnik says not, of course, and one of the sergeants supports him. But there was nobody with Munro when it happened, and he was out on the West Road. They're trying to round up some witnesses now.

RIBERAC *(quietly)*: Rosa believes it was not a pure accident.

FORTROSE: That child's all nerves tonight. Doesn't even want to go home. Ann hasn't looked in, has she?

RIBERAC: I think not.

FORTROSE: I'll ask Ann to talk to Rosa, if she does look in. Have a good dinner, Louis?

RIBERAC: Yes, but the champagne was terrible. And even so, I drank far too much.

FORTROSE: Any particular reason?

RIBERAC: I think I am like poor little Rosa—all nerves tonight. I find now I hate these fiestas. Too much drumming and strumming and clapping and singing and sweating and clutching. I do not like being reminded that we are all still in a monkey house.

FORTROSE *(relaxing)*: You need some leave, Louis. So do I. Yet, I must say, coming back from the hospital just now I felt that if I'd had an evening out, and Jill with me, I could have enjoyed it. I suddenly felt a great affection for these people, Louis. They deserve all we can do for them—and a lot more. And it doesn't follow, you know—as Jill seems to think, you too sometimes—that just because people are cleaner and healthier and can read and write, that all the colour and fun go. God help me!—for I suppose I often sound a dreary prig—but I like colour and fun too. What's the matter, Louis?

RIBERAC *(shrugging, ready to go now)*: Too much food, too many drinks. A little sick perhaps.

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(KARAM now appears at door R.)

KARAM: Sir——

FORTROSE (*rather surprised*): What is it, Karam?

KARAM: Senor Lerma here.

FORTROSE: A late caller. All right—show him in.

(As KARAM goes, he turns to RIBERAC.)

Like to clear out before he arrives, Louis?

RIBERAC (*with an effort*): If you please—no. I should like to see him for one minute. If you don't mind.

FORTROSE (*with a curious glance*): No, of course not. More your chum than mine.

RIBERAC (*who is tense, waiting*): No.

FORTROSE: You don't like him?

RIBERAC (*as before*): No.

FORTROSE: Well, don't upset him too much.

RIBERAC: He is not a man easily disturbed. But why not?

FORTROSE (*very quietly*): I am anxious to know the real reason he wants to see me as late as this. He may be the key figure.

RIBERAC: I think he is.

FORTROSE: On the other hand, I don't much believe in deliberate conspiracies. I wish I did, because they would make life much simpler. But we don't live in a world of neat plots, but in a foggy atmosphere of prejudices and cross-purposes, silly rumours, tragic blunders.

(A moment's pause, then KARAM, holding open door R., admits

LERMA who is dressed as before.)

LERMA (*smoothly*): Sir Edward, you must forgive me for calling on you at this time of night.

FORTROSE: Please don't apologise——

LERMA (*noticing RIBERAC*): Ah—Monsieur Ribierac—we meet again——

RIBERAC (*tensely*): Yes, Mr. Lerma, we meet again. (To FORTROSE.) May I speak for one moment so that then I can leave you?

FORTROSE: Of course, Louis.

RIBERAC (*taking thick envelope from his pocket*): Mr. Lerma, here are the two thousand five hundred dollars you gave me.

(He holds out the envelope, and LERMA takes it, without looking at it.)

LERMA (*calmly*): You are a very foolish young man, Monsieur Ribierac. Now you have offended Sir Edward, you have displeased me, and you have robbed yourself of two thousand five hundred dollars.

FORTROSE: No, I'm not offended. I guessed something like this had happened. I feel better now. But perhaps you can explain yourself, Louis.

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RIBERAC: I did not give him back his bribe——

LERMA (*cutting in, smoothly*): No, no—please, not a bribe, a genuine price. I would never think of buying an intelligent man for such a paltry sum. Let us call it—shall we say—*un pourboire*——

RIBERAC (*with furious anger*): If you were a younger man I would spit in your face for that.

FORTROSE (*hastily, as LERMA steps back*): No, Louis—you're talking to me now. Go on.

RIBERAC (*slowly, curiously cold now*): I did not return to him his *pourboire* because of UNUTO. But partly perhaps because of you, Edward. I have an affection for you and I will admit that when I feel good myself, then I like you all the better.

FORTROSE (*sincerely*): Thank you, Louis.

RIBERAC (*as before*): But it was chiefly this. I am now a lonely man. But there is somebody I have to live with—Louis Ribera. And for the last two weeks, though we have done no harm to you, we have not been comfortable together. I call him a fool. He calls me a rat. And somewhere, in the darkness at the back of my mind, there is a little radio . . . with Goebbels still talking. . . . That is something you do not understand. (*Formally.*) Sir Edward, you will of course please accept my resignation from your staff.

FORTROSE: Not until we have talked it over, Louis. Come and see me in the morning.

RIBERAC (*looking hard at him*): All right. Although it is only late at night I begin to tell the truth to you. But please promise me this—that when you have sent this man away—very soon, I hope—you will not stay here, waiting to see what other piece of your world here is rotten with corruption, but will go to your bedroom, lock the door and dream of your green English fields. (*He turns, stares at LERMA.*) For your sake I wish I still believed in Hell.

(*He goes out R. There is a moment's silence. Then LERMA, quite unshaken, sits down comfortably and looks smilingly at FORTROSE, who, not sitting yet and trying to recover himself, can now light a pipe or cigarette.*)

LERMA: One of our minor illusions, Sir Edward, is that the French are a sober people. Actually the figures for the consumption of alcohol in France clearly disprove this. And I think that young man——

FORTROSE (*cutting in, massively*): Mr. Lerma, Louis is a friend of mine. We won't discuss him. Moreover, it's late—I've still some work to do—and I don't like you. So please come to the point.

LERMA (*unruffled*): Certainly. But you will make it easier for me if you sit down.

(*FORTROSE sits, not behind desk, but further down, not too far from LERMA.*)

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First, the offer I made you when we last met is still open. (*As FORTROSE makes a contemptuous gesture of dismissal.*) Very well, you reject it. Next, I sail tomorrow morning. And I offer you an extremely comfortable passage as my guest.

FORTROSE (*surprised but not showing it too much*): But why should I want a passage on your yacht?

LERMA (*smiling*): Sir Edward, you force me to speak plainly.

FORTROSE: Make it as plain as you can.

LERMA (*carefully*): Dayton is an expert mineralogist on our staff. He has asked me for a stateroom on my yacht not only for himself but also for Lady Fortrose. It would be better, in my opinion, if you came with us as a third guest. (*As FORTROSE makes an impatient gesture and noise, as if about to break in, LERMA hastily stops him.*) And if I take you away from here early tomorrow morning, you will soon realise that I have done you a considerable service, and then your gratitude would be useful to me.

FORTROSE: And then again—if I left tomorrow, under the threat of trouble here, the case against UNUTO would be much stronger.

LERMA (*coolly*): Certainly. But you can take it for granted, Sir Edward, that the United Nations Undeveloped Territories Organisation will not control this island much longer. It is now much too valuable.

FORTROSE: Beryllium?

LERMA: Excellent. It is a pleasure to talk to you, my dear Sir Edward. I shall be perfectly frank. And to show you that you are now close to very deep waters indeed. (*He leans forward confidentially.*) We are badly in need of a metal, to encase the uranium in atomic piles, that will stand high temperatures and high pressures and yet allow the neutrons to act. Beryllium is such a metal, which does not inhibit the passage of neutrons.

FORTROSE: I shall be equally frank, Mr. Lerma. I shall do my damndest to inhibit the passage of this island into the control of you and your friends.

LERMA: Then you are not a realist, and I am disappointed. We are talking now about the naked realities of power in this unpleasant world. (*With graver and more intimate tone.*) Sir Edward, you run a grave risk by staying here. You are in danger.

FORTROSE (*after rising slowly*): I know that. I've pretended not to be aware of it, but I am. I've even made certain preparations. This afternoon I sent a cable to MacDowell, the Director-General of UNUTO in Washington. There are, you know, eleven of these Undeveloped Territories, and different types of men in charge of them. I have advised MacDowell—in case anything happened to me here—not to send Brattisti—his original choice as my successor—to take

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over, but Forgenius, who is a Finn—and a tough, impatient sort of man, passionately devoted to the idea of UNUTO and the United Nations. (*He pauses a moment, then slower and softer, but very impressively.*) I have also given to the pilot of the plane that left this evening, a letter, a long letter, addressed to an old friend of mine who is a great journalist and quite fearless. In that letter I have told him the whole story of what has been happening here, and have begged him to make the fullest possible use of it if anything happens to me. Then—he will tell the world.

LERMA (*coolly*): No doubt he will try to. But the world, my friend, does not care.

FORTROSE (*with passionate conviction*): If it does not care today, then it will care tomorrow.

LERMA (*who has also risen*): I am afraid you are already living in some other world.

FORTROSE (*same tone*): Of course I am. I'm trying to live by faith, hope, and love. What else is there to live by?

LERMA: And what has all this brought you?

FORTROSE: What has your philosophy brought you? Or all of us? We know by now. The camp at Belsen and the little tube of cyanide in Himmler's mouth. (*He hesitates a moment, then with a more intimate tone.*) For various reasons I've been feeling lonely tonight—rather frightened too, I'll admit it. But even now, Lerma, I don't think I feel as lonely and afraid as you've felt for the last forty years. You see this island as so many deposits of beryllium silicate. I see it as a community of people, who sooner or later cannot help but live by faith, hope and love. I doubt if you like people—ordinary, blundering, messy people—

LERMA (*coolly, smiling*): I dislike them intensely.

FORTROSE: They may be misled today, but tomorrow, next year, in ten years' time, they'll remember, understand again, and be with us once more. If I had time I'd take you round this island and show you what we've done. But there isn't time—

LERMA: No. Perhaps even less than you think. And I must go.

FORTROSE (*struck with an idea*): Just a minute! Here at least is one concrete example. No—(*as LERMA shows signs of impatience.*) I've only to ring for an island girl who happens to be here. You can just take a look at her, and then I'll explain as I take you out. (*He has now gone up to desk and rung the bell for ROSA.*) She's acting as my secretary just now, and tonight doesn't even want to leave this building.

LERMA (*dryly*): She may have more than one good reason for that.

(*ROSA enters L., closing door behind her. She looks inquiringly at FORTROSE.*)

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FORTROSE: Rosa, come and meet Mr. Lerma, who doesn't believe in what we're trying to do in UNUTO.

(ROSA, *wonderingly and shyly*, comes forward, and LERMA advances a step or two to shake hands and look hard at her.)

ROSA (*shyly*): Good evening, sir.

LERMA: How do you do, Rosa? And do you believe in UNUTO?

ROSA (*shyly*): Yes, I do, sir.

LERMA (*softly*): And is that why you are staying here so late tonight?

ROSA (*looking rather distressed*): Well—in a way it is, sir—but—well——

LERMA (*still softly*): Well—what?

ROSA (*almost in a whisper*): I feel—rather frightened.

(LERMA gives a look, then a nod, and turns away towards door R.)

FORTROSE (*heartily*): Nonsense, Rosa, there's nothing to be frightened about. But stay here until I come back—and listen for the private phone.

(He turns towards door R., taking LERMA along with him. As he shows LERMA out, he can be heard beginning.)

Well, there's one example. A few years ago—that child——

(But now they have gone out R. and the door is closed behind them. Left alone, ROSA is clearly apprehensive. She moves about, tries sitting down where she sat at opening of scene, then moves again, then sits.)

Door/windows at back are now suddenly kicked and VEZABAR enters, dressed as in Act I. He has been drinking hard, and shows it by a wild eye, hard breathing, and an air of savagery only just under control. Dance music can now be heard softly but in maddening regular rhythm at back.

When VEZABAR has entered, FELIPE is now seen just inside towards R. of space there. He watches intently. ROSA rises slowly, as if paralysed by fear, as VEZABAR slowly comes nearer, regarding her with a kind of angry glee. When he is close to her, she gives a startled cry and tries quickly to turn and bolt for door L. But he reaches out at once, stops her and spins her round to face him.)

VEZABAR (*with savage mockery*): Yes—yes—I spik English also.

(He gives her two very sharp hard slaps, one on each cheek, then rips down one shoulder of her blouse or dress, exposing her bare brown shoulder almost down to the breast. All this must be done with a brutal zest.)

So—get out!

(He gives her a shove that sends her obliquely upstage R. several paces. She is now sobbing. VEZABAR, relishing it all, slowly

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*follows up a pace or two, to cut off any chance of her running out L. or R. FELIPE now comes in a step or so, his eyes fixed on her in eager anticipation. There is a marked animal quality about this youth.*

*He reaches out and puts a hand on her shoulder or a little below it, and stares at her with eager lecherous eyes. The music continues. Her resistance suddenly collapses. Slowly she allows him to pull her out into the darkness. Amused, VEZABAR lights a cigarette and sprawls in a chair, tapping a hand or foot to the music.*

*After a few moments FORTROSE comes in R. and glances round for ROSA.)*

FORTROSE (calling, not too loud): Rosa! Rosa!

VEZABAR (not rising from his chair): Rosa is gone. I say to 'er Get out!—an' she get out—dam' quick.

FORTROSE (gravely): Where has she gone?

VEZABAR (grinning): To 'ave swell time wit' island boy. Corabana girl like to 'ave swell time at fiesta—dance—dreenk—make beeg love.

(FORTROSE looks at him, controlling his anger. He speaks with icy control.)

FORTROSE: I warned you, when you came here before, that you had just two weeks in which to finish your business here. Those two weeks are up. I propose to have you deported on the first ship going north.

VEZABAR (chuckling): Beeg talk! Fine beeg talk! See—I am afraid very much.

*(He spits noisily to show his contempt. After giving him a disgusted glance, FORTROSE goes behind desk to pick up telephone. He tries one telephone and then another. It is clear that both lines are dead. VEZABAR now rises slowly, with an insolent sense of power.)*

Sir Fortrose, you waste good time. Telephone—finish. Munro in hospital. Two inspector—three sergeant—all locked up. My boys in cable an' radio offices. In one hour we take over—all round'. UNUTO—finish!

FORTROSE: Vezabar, this is childish. UNUTO isn't just a few men and women here. It has the whole United Nations behind it.

VEZABAR (kicks his chair angrily. With angry contempt): It is you who talk like child. I am poleetical man—I know. I come back to Corabana because I know UNUTO no good now—an' if we 'ave leetle revolution 'ere, den United Nations do not'ing. You t'eenk I am a fool, like you. I come back 'ere wit' plenty money—beeg influence.

FORTROSE (steadily): I don't care how much money you have, or how much big influence you think you have, Vezabar—just consider yourself under arrest.



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VEZABAR (*with angry contempt*): Ah—*Dios*—you talk like Goddam' baby. Why you t'eenk I come 'ere now—to see you?

FORTROSE: I don't know. But I do know that I'm going to have you deported.

VEZABAR: I show you why I come. (*He produces a document with something of a flourish.*) You read Spanish? (*He gets up and hands over document.*)

FORTROSE (*taking document*): Not very well. What is this nonsense

VEZABAR (*with dangerous calm now*): Is nonsense, eh? In de paper you ask me—Vezabar—to take over Island—to made order an' everyt'eeng nice an' safe for Island people—because you, Sir Fortrose an' UNUTO staff can no more make order 'ere—eh?

FORTROSE (*calmly*): I see. You're trying to work that favourit trick of all political gangsters.

VEZABAR (*still with dangerous calm*): You sign—okay—you go—If you don't sign—too bad. Plenty trouble—maybe plenty shooting—soon tonight 'ere—an' Sir Fortrose is runnin' round Port San Pedro—tryin' to make order—an' maybe bullet finds him. Too bad. Finish

FORTROSE: It is you who are finished Vezabar. There is a new world and you can't shoot your way into it or out of it.

VEZABAR: Like hell. So you sign damn quick or else.

FORTROSE: There's your letter. (*Tears it across*). You are no under arrest.

VEZABAR: You arrest me? P'raps you not live so long.

FORTROSE (*looking at him, calmly*): Even so you can't win, Vezabar. This year, next year—sometime my successor will have you arrested.

VEZABAR (*angry and loud*): There will be nobody. I tell you eet is all finish—

(VEZABAR fires four shots at FORTROSE, who collapses on to the desk. FORTROSE clutches the box of emergency dressings but cannot hold it and it falls in front of the desk. In the last effort he lurches forward over the desk and knocks off several things including a large globe, which has been prominently displayed on the desk throughout this act. He then dies, still leaning forward over the desk. The music can be heard. After a few moments ROSA enters from the back, looking dishevelled. She stares at FORTROSE and after hesitating a moment picks up the shawl she has left behind on the chair and covers FORTROSE's body with it. Then she picks up the globe, and carefully replaces it by the side of the dead man. She then goes to the switch down stage left and switches on the lights, which illuminate the two maps. She sits in the down stage chair, as if awaiting further orders. Slow curtain.)

END

